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**THE BELGIANS**









BELGIUM

# THE BELGIANS

CYRIL C. DAVENPORT

THE BELGIANS

NEW YORK  
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY  
1903



INTROD. VAN DICE.

BELGIUM  
AND  
THE BELGIANS

BY  
CYRIL SCUDAMORE

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*

NEW YORK  
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY  
1903

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## Preface

THE object of the present work is not that of a guide-book, but rather to convey that information respecting Belgium and its people which we look for in vain in the excellent topographical works of Baedeker, Murray, Grant Allen, Ward & Lock, Lindley, and Jean d'Ardenne.

In the chapter on "The Holiday Ground of Belgium" the writer has endeavoured to describe faithfully a tour made by him in the summer of 1899 through the Liège district and the Ardennes. He does not profess to have discovered anything new or strange; but as he has carefully avoided describing any place which he has not recently visited, he believes that his narrative may possibly be of use to those who may wish to undertake a similar excursion.

In writing the chapters on Education, Government, and Folk-Lore, he has placed himself under obligation to many Belgian writers and journalists,

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and believes that in most cases he has acknowledged his indebtedness in the proper place; but to quote all the newspapers, pamphlets, and official documents from which he has derived his information would be quite beyond his power.

A Belgian acquaintance has been kind enough to write an account of the state of parties in Belgium during the past sixteen years. This perhaps will be found of use to those who wish to gain some knowledge of a country whose political situation is likely to become interesting within the next few years to other people besides the Belgians themselves.

In conclusion, the author has to thank M. Dessaerts, Avocat, of Brussels, for some of the photographs which accompany the work. Other illustrations have been contributed by E. Not and G. Dethine-Mottet, photographers of Brussels and Liège.

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# Belgium and the Belgians



## IMPRESSIONS OF BELGIUM OF TO-DAY

### I

REGARDED from most points of view, few countries in Europe are better worth visiting than Belgium, and, with the exception of France, none is more accessible to the English traveller. Of the three routes by which Belgium is approached, that by Calais offers the shortest sea-passage; and in some respects it is the best for those who wish to proceed to Brussels direct. It is, however, the most expensive also, and owing to the longer railway journey, through one of the tamer tracts of Northern France, the least interesting route of all. The Ostend journey is by far the most agreeable in fine weather, and, as a choice of evils, the best in rough. The passage from Harwich to Antwerp is longer but cheaper, and offers the additional advantage that you go to bed at Harwich, and unless disturbed by seasickness wake up refreshed, in time to enjoy break-

fast and the pleasant voyage up the smoother Schelde, before reaching the much - beleaguered city. But whatever route may be adopted, and however unruly Father Neptune may have been, one always feels an indefinable sense of pleasure in setting foot once more on Belgian soil.

Nor is the reason far to seek, for in each case the ultimate goal of the journey is one of the most interesting and animated of European cities, Brussels, or Ostend, or Antwerp. The first is in itself a miniature Paris, and in the opinion of some even preferable to that metropolis; the second, one of the most fashionable and lively of watering-places; the third, a commercial city no doubt, but one of considerable attraction, and teeming with works of art and of architecture of admirable beauty.

But perhaps it is the pervading spirit of life and energy which strikes the Englishman most on landing in Belgium, and it is this which during my many visits to that country has impressed itself upon my mind with greater vividness on each successive occasion. Nor is this to be wondered at, if we remember that, for its size, Belgium is one of the most prosperous, if not the most prosperous, of European countries. It is small, it is true, only a mere 11,373 square miles in extent, and somewhat overpopulated with its six millions of souls; but it finds many useful outlets for its surplus population, and these outlets are ever increasing with its ever-expanding commerce. Nor is there any excessive expenditure on a burden-

some and exacting military system, as in the case of the greater Continental Powers. For this reason the industrious Belgian is able to develop the natural resources of his country, and increase his manufactures, without much distraction from those rumours of war which in the case of other and less fortunate States too often mean largely increased armaments and taxation.

The twofold nationality of the Belgian is one of the chief conditions of his success. It has often been remarked that England owes her own position to the fusing together of so many different strains in the composition of the nation. Thus the *perfervidum ingenium* of the Scot, the fiery vivacity and quickness of the Celt, to say nothing of Gallic, Teutonic, and other elements, have all at one time or another blended their virtues and no doubt their defects with the shrewd common-sense of the Anglo-Saxon character. In Belgium, on the other hand, *two* races and not several are predominant, and in spite of common interests and aims are still as plainly distinguishable, in language, form, and temperament, as if they were living hundreds of miles apart. But much as the Fleming may differ in disposition and appearance from his Walloon compatriot, both possess in a marked degree the qualities of energy and perseverance.

Perhaps it will be as well to glance for a moment at the origin of these races, in one respect so similar, in others apparently so different. No one who has



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been in Belgium can have failed to notice the dark piercing eye, often of intense brightness, the lithe active form, and the eager vivacity of the true Walloon, as exemplified, for example, in many of the Liégois and people of the Ardennes districts. Not less clearly marked is the ponderous, phlegmatic, somewhat dreamy aspect of the frequently blond Fleming, whose native abode is in Flanders or in Brabant. Ethnologists, looking back across the centuries, tell us that there are three elements observable in the races of the Belgians of to-day, and that although two of these are now grouped together under the term Walloon, they are in reality quite distinct.

The origin of the typical Walloon, to whom I have alluded above, has given rise to much controversy; but it seems to be agreed that he belongs to that dark pre-Aryan race which early found a home in the south of France, Italy, and Spain, and of whom we find undoubted traces in Ireland and even in Wales. Tacitus, it may be noted, long ago remarked that the "Silures" in Wales resembled the Spaniards near the Ebro. So strongly marked are the characteristics of this type that when one observes in Brussels or Antwerp a man with an intensely dark eye and great vivacity of manner one is not far wrong in assuming that he is a native of Liège, or at any rate of the country adjoining the Meuse.

The other type, to which the majority of Walloons belong, is less dark, and is Celtic in origin. These

are no doubt descendants of the Gauls of Cæsar's epoch, while the Flemings are obviously of Germanic extraction, and indeed are sprung from the Franks, who, after emancipating themselves from the Roman rule, gradually colonised the north of Belgium. As some five-eighths of the population are Flemings, the greater number of the people whom one sees in Belgium point with their light or chestnut hair to a Teutonic origin.

But here again there are two types: the one tall, with elongated face and long straight nose; the other of medium height, broad-shouldered, with large nose, high cheek-bones, and round countenance. Most of the Belgians must be included in the latter category. It is not a little singular that the Flemish provinces which in the Middle Ages were noted for the great size of their inhabitants should now contain the larger proportion of small men. M. Vanderkindere considers this anomaly to be the result of the cruelties of the Inquisition, which led the more adventurous and independent spirits, who favoured the Reformation, to seek a home in other lands, beyond the reach of persecution. Others consider that the exodus of enterprising colonists to far-off Africa and elsewhere may have taken away the more vigorous Flemings and brought about the same result. The tallest men are usually to be found in the Walloon province of Namur.

There is, as one might expect, a certain element of Spanish blood, a relic of the war in the Nether-

## 6 BELGIUM AND THE BELGIANS

lands, which is still observable in such towns as Bruges and Ostend. I remember, indeed, a Spaniard of my acquaintance pointing out a dark and not unprepossessing girl with the remark, "Now that lady might be a Spaniard." As a matter of fact she was a Walloon, but one of the dark type to which I have alluded above; and I mention this as I think that it rather clenches the argument respecting the pre-Aryan origin of the darker Walloons already referred to.

The difference between the two languages is very great. Flemish is clearly Teutonic, and akin to English, German, and Dutch, while the Walloon is a tongue almost apart, the Celtic-Latin having absorbed all Germanic elements. Most of the names of Flemish towns are purely Germanic, while the majority of those in the Walloon country are clearly of Celtic origin.

As a general rule the best-looking men in Belgium are those who take after the Walloon type. Some of these dark men are undoubtedly handsome. The Flemish figure and cast of countenance—broad, sturdy, and prone to fatness—do not usually lend themselves to the fashioning of an Apollo. With the female portion of the community, on the other hand, the case is different. Tastes may differ, but I fancy that in a gallery of Belgian beauties there would be quite as many examples of the Belle Flamande as of her darker sister, the graceful Wallonne. Placed in the balance, the bright healthy

complexion, soft eyes, and rich clustering brown hair of the Flemish girl contrast strongly with the slight and almost frail figure, instinct, however, with vivacity, of her black-eyed rival. I say nothing of weight,—that, alas! will come, only too surely, as the years roll on; and it is this which ultimately spoils the good looks of many Flemish ladies. Still, even in this there are compensations, and the good nature of many seems to increase in the same degree as their figure assumes more ample proportions.

## II

In the matter of dress Belgium is little if anything behind her Gallic neighbour. All ladies in Belgium understand the art of dress at least as well as the average Frenchwoman, while the neatness and trim appearance of the ordinary work-girl must strike even the most superficial of observers. It would, indeed, be a matter for wonder how they could manage this on their scanty wages, did one not remember that there are excellent classes for dress-making in most of the large towns in Belgium, and that many of these working girls are quite competent to make their own dresses. Should any fair reader be sceptical on this point, she has but to step into the Musée Scolaire at Brussels, where she will see specimens of dresses made by the girls in Belgian schools which will make her think of her latest

purchase in Bond Street or Regent Street with a feeling of regret. The sums spent on dress by ladies of the upper classes must in many cases be considerable, and of this, no doubt, the Belgian husband is well aware. But as they dress with admirable taste and do not spend much money in other ways, we may hope that his grumble at the dimensions of the bill is not untempered by a certain sense of satisfaction. He probably likes to see his wife looking smart, and she for her part is quite willing to make up for her partner's deficiencies in that particular. For the Belgian gentleman himself is not much of a dandy. Usually he is too much engrossed with money-making, or it may be with sport, to pay any very great attention to his clothes. As long as he is fairly tidy, he is satisfied. Of course there are plenty of exceptions, but I speak of the average gentleman of the better classes—landowners, bankers, lawyers, and the like. Many prefer to have their coats cut by an English tailor, but, as a rule, these are the gilded youth. The ordinary Belgian is quite content with his father's tailor, and, like a Frenchman, will frequently wear a tie of quaint pattern and of abnormal dimensions.

Clothing is not cheap in Belgium, and ladies' clothing especially is dear; but many other things are much cheaper than in England—education, for example, house-rents, and living generally. The Belgian lady, therefore, may spend money freely on

her dress without feeling that Albert or Henriette will suffer in their schooling in consequence, or that her husband will have to give up the comfortable house near the Park or the Avenue Louise as the result of her extravagance.

The dress of the lower classes in Belgium has undergone great changes since the commencement of the nineteenth century, and now one sees little in the towns to attract attention in the matter of dress. The otter-skin or leather cap and the great cape which protected the patriots of 1830 against the inclemency of the weather, did not long survive that glorious epoch. The three-cornered hat, and the breeches, so common at the Waterloo era, had almost disappeared by the time that Belgium had acquired her hardly-won independence.

In the provinces the blouse and the casquette or cap still hold their own. In Walloon districts the former is short, and rarely descends below the waist, while in the Flemish provinces it reaches frequently down to the knees, and is also of a deeper blue in colour. In the province of Antwerp and parts of the Campine the cap with long projecting flaps is still in use, and at Bruges on market-days one may still observe the girls with the coloured headdress and short striped skirt so familiar in the pictures of the last century. The comfortable but slipshod wooden shoe continues to survive in the Flemish districts, and together with the blouse will probably be among the last remaining relics of costume of

the nineteenth century that will be still in evidence in this.

One of the chief impressions conveyed to one's mind in travelling through the north of Belgium is the comparative bigness and nearness of the towns. A momentary glance at the map shows that outside a sixty-mile radius from the capital there is scarce a single town of importance. Moreover, this radius includes all the flat and fertile districts of Flanders and Brabant. Another impression made on one, particularly when travelling by rail, is that the houses which we pass on the line are singularly wanting in beauty, being for the most part red-tiled buildings with bare, whitewashed walls. I say "bare," but this is not altogether accurate, for nearly all of these structures are adorned with advertisements testifying to the merits of some wonderful soap of exquisite purity, or of a pill of singular efficacy, or announcing—what one has no chance of forgetting if one would—that a certain journal has a circulation of one million readers.

Nor is there much in the landscape of Flanders to relieve the eye and break the feeling of monotony engendered by the interminable rows of poplars, the straight and sluggish canals, and the bare stretches of plain which meet the view on either side of the line. Yet when the corn is ripe, and the rays of the setting sun turn as with a magician's touch the fertile fields into a wide expanse of gold, we are compelled to confess that Flanders possesses then,

if for a brief season only, a beauty that is all her own.

Notwithstanding the general tameness of the landscape, pretty views are to be found dotted about Flanders here and there, but chiefly of that kind which is produced by the combination of green sward and clustering trees. For wild picturesque woodland and hill scenery, for rippling streams and dashing torrents, one must travel farther south, and, beginning either at Liége or Namur, seek the Walloon country and the Ardennes.

The climate of Belgium is pleasant, and on the score of healthiness leaves little to be desired. The rate of mortality at present is less than 20 per 1000. The Walloon country, as one would expect in a region where woods and streams predominate, is very cold in winter, but the race appears to be hardy, and to flourish



PEASANT GIRL, ARDENNES.

From a chalk-drawing by Hyppolyte Boulenger.



accordingly. Some years ago, indeed, the percentage of octogenarians in the Namur district amounted to 89 for every 1000 persons born. The same statistics gave Liège 60 per 1000, and to Antwerp the low figure of 48 per 1000 born. Namur, Luxemburg, Hainault, and Liège would appear to be the healthiest provinces, while the two Flanders, Brabant, and Antwerp show the greatest mortality. This is, of course, but natural, for one would hardly expect in the crowded cities of a flat country, such as Flanders and Brabant, the same death-rate as that which we find on the breezy uplands of Luxemburg and Namur.

Speaking from my own experience, I may say that I know of no place, in Belgium or out of it, where the purity of the air seems so incontestable as in some portions of the provinces of Namur and Luxemburg. But even here, and in many parts of the Ardennes, a certain amount of discrimination is necessary. A want of better sanitary conditions is somewhat observable in localities which otherwise would be extremely healthy, and the practice so common in the Ardennes of placing cattle-sheds in close proximity to the houses gives them a comfortable and farm-like appearance no doubt, but is not always conducive to the best interests of the community.

I have made some allusion before to the increasing prosperity of the country. Prosperity, however, is a comparative term, and it must not be thought that the wealth of the average Belgian approaches that, for example, of the average Englishman. Quite the

contrary, for the wages and salaries in Belgium are low as compared with those of the corresponding classes in England, and large fortunes are the exception throughout the country. But the purchasing power of twenty-five francs is much greater than that of the equivalent sovereign, the cost of living is less, and such wealth as there is is more evenly distributed. A lieutenant-colonel in the Belgian army receives £300 a-year, or less than the pay of a major in an English regiment. A Cabinet Minister obtains no more than £840, a sum which represents the income of the Archbishop of Malines, the Primate of Belgium. But the two first named would probably receive money from other sources, while the celibate archbishop would, no doubt, find the State-provided salary sufficient for his personal wants. So in other classes. The Belgian bank-clerk with £90 a-year is quite as well off as his colleague in England who draws £120, while the manager who is in receipt of £300 would scarcely care to exchange for £400 in an office on the other side of the Channel.

The low rentals in the towns have much to do with this state of things. For £80 a large house may be taken in the very best quarter of a town such as Brussels, the rates and taxes coming to an additional £20 or so; and in the suburbs a good house may be obtained for half that figure, and in some cases for very much less. A good unfurnished flat suitable for three or four persons, and in an attractive neighbourhood, may be had for £50 a-year. The cost of a

comfortable room, such as those occupied by young business men in Belgium, is from £1 to £2 a-month; and there are excellent pensions or boarding-houses where the cost of board and lodging is not more than 5s. or 6s. a-day.

In Belgium meat is usually imported, and is neither particularly good nor cheap. On the other hand, poultry, fruit, and vegetables are excellent, and may be obtained at very moderate prices. Education is well organised throughout the country, and the comparatively low fees demanded make the cost of instruction less onerous to the middle classes than in England. Servants' wages, too, are lower than with us; but a good servant knows her own value, and, as the Belgian housewife is well aware, must be paid accordingly. The prices in the provincial towns are much lower than in the capital, but fashionable watering-places such as Ostend and Spa have, as might be supposed, a tariff of their own. Railway travelling, theatres, and amusements generally are too inexpensive to be a heavy tax on the average Belgian, although he has not, as a rule, a leaning in the direction of economy in this particular.

### III

The condition of the working man in Belgium is not so unsatisfactory as the socialists would have us suppose. It is true that the wages of the country

labourers are low, but in the towns artisans are fairly well paid in comparison with those of other countries. After writing the above my eye fell upon a paragraph in the 'Congo Belge,' which seems to me to bear out my last statement. A comparison is made there between the average earnings of the working classes in various countries, and this will, I think, bear quotation. "In the United States the average wage amounts to 1740 francs; in England to 1020; in France, 875 francs; in Belgium, 825 francs; in Germany, 775; in Sweden and Austria, 750; in Spain and Russia, 600."

It will be noticed that in each case the price of living would seem to be proportioned to the amount of the salary. Nowhere, for example, is the cost of living dearer for working men than in America and in England. Assuming, then, that the artisan is no worse off in Belgium than in other parts of Europe, we must not fail to take account of the fact that his prosperity is to a great degree dependent on the habits of temperance which he has acquired; for of all the countries in the world, Belgium is indeed the land of the tavern. Statistics on the subject of alcoholic drinks appear at first sight nothing less than appalling.

Belgium expends, in its 195,000 *cabarets* or taverns, the sum of 150 million francs a-year, whereas the annual expenditure of the State for educational purposes amounts to no more than 16½ million francs for 6209 schools. This, too, in a population of somewhat

over six millions! Such are the figures quoted in a recent circular by the "Patriotic League against Alcoholism." They would appear to understate the case, for had they included all retailers of liquor, such as wine-merchants, hotel-keepers, and others who sell intoxicating drinks, it would have been found that the total number of vendors of liquor amounted in the December of the same year (1897) to no less than 200,699, of whom 61,464 sold fermented drinks only, such as beer, wine, and cider, while the remainder retailed spirits in addition. Thus out of every thirty persons in Belgium one is employed in selling intoxicating liquors in one form or another, and the result of all this, as one would expect, is a rather large proportion of drunkenness, and of crime committed under the influence of drink. Every Belgian newspaper speaks eloquently on the subject by the unexaggerated record of offences of this nature which it chronicles in its columns day after day.

The condition of things, however, is not so bad as statistics might lead us to infer. As M. Vandervelde has pointed out recently in the '*Humanité Nouvelle*,' the great multiplication of cabarets of late years does not appear to have caused a corresponding increase in the actual consumption of liquor. Probably this is due to the fact that in many cases the cabaret is run very much on the principle of the countless small tobacconists' shops in England, less as the sole source of income than as an addition to it.

In some districts the brewers buy up most of the small houses, which they let to the workmen at a low rent on the condition that they retail their beer alone. In this way it becomes the interest of an artisan to sell beer, even if he does not drink it himself, as by this means he secures a cheap house in a place where it might otherwise be hard to obtain one at all. This system, it may be remarked, has a rather beneficial effect in lessening the evils of intemperance in the districts where it is in vogue. Formerly, when there were but two or three inns in a village, the workmen would crowd together in the evening in these, encouraging one another to drink, and would frequently return home in a more or less intoxicated condition. This state of things is now less common than it was, as the men, being scattered about in a large number of cabarets, only meet in groups of two or three, and avoiding undue excess, depart quietly home to bed.

Most of those establishments which pretend to sell nothing but beer and cider retail gin surreptitiously, and thus defraud the revenue. It is said that in spite of the law of 1887, forbidding the hawking of distilled liquors, the hawkers go from one cabaret to another, vending gin and other spirits, without being troubled by any one. It is somewhat singular that in Flanders, where ignorance and crime are more conspicuous than in other parts of Belgium, the consumption of spirits is less than in the comparatively richer Walloon districts. This anomaly is said to be due

to the fact that better beer is brewed in the Flemish provinces than in the Walloon, and that the lower salary obtained by the Flemish workman does not admit of the same degree of indulgence in drink which is at the disposal of his better-paid Walloon *confrère*.

This may be so, but to my mind the radical characters of the two races have much to do with this difference. The Flamand is gross, stolid, and phlegmatic, and prefers to get drunk (to use an Irishism) in a quiet and sober manner; the Walloon, on the other hand, is excitable and volatile, and finds spirits more speedily exhilarating and enlivening than ordinary beer. And, in truth, the Belgian workman's beer, whether *lambic* or *faro*, or by whatever name it may be known, scarcely seems to be a very deadly beverage. Often it is sweet, but rarely strong, and not always quite agreeable to an English taste. The efforts of the "Patriotic League against Alcoholism," alluded to above, are doing much to stem the tide and to encourage habits of sobriety amongst the working classes. The king's brother, the Comte de Flandre, is President of the League, while M. Buls, the burgomaster of Brussels, and other prominent persons, are amongst its honorary members. A small subscription is required of those who join the League, and great pains are taken to persuade teachers and others to inculcate habits of temperance in the children committed to their charge.

A glance at the pictures on the walls of a Belgian



A WALLOON WORKMAN.

From a chalk-drawing by Constantin Meunier.



primary school will convince the most superficial of observers that the evil results of intemperance are graphically displayed before the eyes of the pupils. Although the League recommends abstinence from intoxicating liquors in its statutes, it does not profess to be a temperance society in the strictest acceptance of the term. It aims, however, at combating the bad effects of the traffic in drink by directing public attention to the subject.

In these laudatory efforts it receives support from an unexpected quarter. The General Council of the "Parti Ouvrier," a socialistic organisation, has also raised its voice in the crusade, and the sale of intoxicants has been forbidden in the refreshment-rooms of the "Maison du Peuple," which are co-operative societies run upon socialistic principles.

#### IV

In speaking of the condition of the workmen, one must not ignore the undercurrent of socialism, which in Belgium is nearer to the surface than in most countries. A short account of the history and objects of the movement will explain several matters in Belgian politics which at present are apt to be somewhat obscure to the average Englishman.

It has often been said that the Belgian founds a guild or association wherever he goes. Forty years ago there were several such federations in existence

amongst the working men in Belgium, but with one exception they existed for the purposes of trade, and appear to have had no direct political significance. The single exception was the Association of Weavers, founded at Ghent in 1857. Other organisations of a similar character were afterwards founded in the same town, but all, with the exception of the Association of Weavers, were destroyed by the disastrous cotton famine which fell upon the town at the close of the War of Secession in America. The next movement of the workmen in Belgium, and one which was clearly socialistic, was not confined to Ghent, but began in 1867 with the "Internationale." This was a union of the wool-workers of Verviers with the miners of Hainault and certain of the artisans of Brussels, for the purpose of founding an international association of workmen. Many strikes ensued and some reduction was gained in hours of labour, and then the Internationale, destroyed by the dissensions of its founders, was finally dissolved. Other associations followed with succeeding years, until the organisation known as the "Parti Socialiste Belge" was instituted in 1879. In this period the agitation in favour of universal suffrage and the co-operative movement had its origin.

There still remained, however, by the side of the true socialistic party a certain number of men of more moderate views who shrank from openly declaring themselves as Socialists. There were also a number of Mutualists—that is to say, persons who

relied on the assistance of clubs for mutual aid in case of illness. It was with the idea of amalgamating these divisions into one body that the Parti Ouvrier, representing fifty-nine associations of workers, was founded at Brussels in 1885. At first an effort was made to confine the movement to those who worked solely with their hands, but the claims of the brain-workers were at once admitted by a large majority, and these since that time have met with due recognition.

More than twenty territorial federations of the Parti Ouvrier were represented at their congress at Brussels in April 1897. The chief of these have their centres at Brussels, Ghent, Liège, Verviers, Louvain, Mons, Anvers, and Charleroi, all of them, it will be noted, great centres of industry. They are directed by a "general council," whose committee is elected by the annual congress of the party. This committee is composed of nine members, chosen from among the members of the party inhabiting the town in which the sessions of the council are held. In order to cover its expenses of correspondence, it receives a small sum annually from each affiliated society, as well as a portion of the parliamentary salary of the twenty-nine socialist members of the House of Representatives.

This sum, however, does not cover the expenses necessary for propagating the doctrines of Socialism which are incurred by the various co-operative societies and the newspapers which support the

organisation. The programme of the Parti Ouvrier is a long one, but it may be worth while to quote a few of its clauses with the view of showing the aims of the founders of the society. As one who, being Conservative by instinct, does not believe that a Utopia can be found in a republic—and a republic would be the outcome of Belgian socialism, if carried to its logical conclusion—I shall do little more than indicate briefly the outline of the programme, avoiding as far as possible any political bias on points of controversy.

#### POLITICAL PROGRAMME OF THE PARTI OUVRIER.

Under electoral reform we find the following :

Universal suffrage for all classes, without distinction of sex, the age of qualification for the franchise being fixed at twenty-one years, with a period of six months' residence.

The senate to be suppressed. (What check would be substituted to control too hasty legislation is not stated.)

In the commune the mayor is to be appointed by the electoral body, and the small communes or parishes are to be amalgamated.

Education would undergo a few changes, of which the most radical would seem to be the maintenance at the State expense of the children frequenting the schools, and the administration of the schools by

committees, elected by the universal suffrage of both sexes, with representatives of the State and also of the teaching staff. Church and State would be separated, and the money now devoted by the State to the maintenance of religious worship would be directed into other channels.

The civil equality of both sexes would be recognised, and the law regarding divorce would undergo revision.

In judicial matters the reforms would be equally sweeping. Justice would be administered gratuitously, the magistrates and lawyers being remunerated by the State, indemnities being paid to victims of judicial error.

In the second part of the programme, dealing with the internal economy of the country, various suggestions are made for the regulation of labour by law, the protection of industries, and the fixing of a minimum salary and maximum of working hours, in the case of artisans, labourers, and employees of the State. In the case of public employees and managers, a maximum salary is suggested of £240 a-year.

Further, all citizens would have to be insured from the funds now at the disposal of the various benevolent institutions. These would be employed in the case of persons who were out of work, or incapable of labour, owing to accident, sickness, or old age. (No doubt plenty would be out of work, if such an arrangement held good, and this is exactly where the futility of such schemes is most evident.)

Taxes on provisions and custom-dues would be

abolished, while tobacco and alcohol would become monopolies.

Mines, quarries, and the subsoil in general, as well as the chief means of production and transport, would be worked for the benefit of the public.

The forests, too, would become national property, while the State and communes would gradually resume possession of the soil itself. (I need hardly remark upon the inexpediency as well as the injustice of this clause, the arguments against such action being sufficiently obvious.)

There is more reason in some of the next portions of the programme, which deal with the regulation of industrial labour. Such are the suggestions that there should be one day's rest per week, if possible on Sunday, and that children under fourteen years of age should not be permitted to work, and that women should only be allowed to work under conditions suitable for health.

In addition to these reforms, the working day is to be reduced to eight hours, and employers would be liable in the event of accidents occurring in their works.

Those workmen who are past work would be provided for in homes built for the purpose.

Such are some of the objects set forth in the programme of the Parti Ouvrier, and expounded at length by two Socialist members of the Chambre de Députés, Messrs Destrée and Vandervelde, in their work on Belgian Socialism.

To our notions, of course, many of these schemes are utterly illusory and hopelessly impracticable, while of the more moderate measures, some, such as the pensions for old age, have already received the attention of the Government. The Belgian newspapers allude much to the doctrine of "collectivism," which recently has been defined as "the collective appropriation of all the means of production and circulation." It is explained by the Socialists, however, that this definition is incomplete, and that this appropriation would only apply where the concentration of capital has caused small properties founded by labour to disappear. Of course they would have us assume that the small proprietor would be equally well protected, after the "bloated capitalist" had been made to disgorge. It will be noticed that the Belgian workman is now confronted with the same *ad captandum* fallacies which were dangled before the workers of other countries long ago.

There are also in Belgium, besides the organisation of the Parti Ouvrier, a large number of workmen's syndicates or unions, carried on mainly on socialistic principles. There are at Ghent no fewer than nineteen of these groups (including 9895 members) in connection with various trades, such as weavers, masons, printers, and the like. Then, too, there are the co-operative societies, such as the Maison du Peuple at Brussels, with 15,000 members, and that of the Vooruit at Ghent, with 6000. The



**BELGIUM'S "BLACK COUNTRY."**

From a drawing by Constantin Meunier.



societies for mutual help (*Mutualités*) are also numerous in Belgium, and were at the last census 369 in number, with a roll of some 54,000 members. But these figures only refer to the recognised societies, which sent in particulars to the Government. The others, some sixty-five in number and mainly socialistic, included all those which were affiliated to the *Parti Ouvrier*. These are now amalgamated in one federation, including 16,000 members (men, women, and children). They receive medical attendance for a trifling sum, after the manner of workmen's clubs in our own country.

The workman who is not a Socialist can find plenty of societies for mutual help, protected by Government, to which he may have recourse in sickness. For an expenditure of one franc or so a month he is enabled to ensure medical attendance and a franc a-day during sickness as long as his illness continues. Should he wish to retire on account of old age or illness before the Pension Bill<sup>1</sup> which is now under the consideration of the Government has become law, he may find a suitable opportunity in that offered by the "*Caisses de Retraite*," or Retiring Funds, recognised by the State. These exist in some of the provinces. Taking that of the *Société de Retraite* at Quaregnon in Hainault as an example,

<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above a Pension Bill has come into force (January 1900) whereby the State contributes to all *Caisses de Retraite*, and provides pensions to all working men of sixty-five and upwards in need of assistance.

we find that a workman of twenty years of age, placing 72 centimes a-week in the Caisse, will have 37 francs 44 centimes at the end of the year. To this the State will add 9 francs 36 centimes, and the province a similar amount, while the society increases the total by 5 francs, thus placing to his credit the sum of 61 francs 16 centimes, or nearly double the amount of his original outlay.

Should he wish to invest his money in a building society and buy his own house, there are plenty of institutions ready to help him. He has only to insure his life at the next post-office, and the society will see to the rest.

The Baron H. de Royer de Dour, Commissioner of the Arrondissement of Brussels, has recently been making inquiries into the condition of the working man and his dwelling, more especially in the country. His remarks are worth quoting, as giving a true picture of the life of the rural labourer in Belgium. In speaking of the neighbourhood of Saintes, where the land is of good quality, he observes that there, as everywhere else, two classes of workmen are found to exist—viz., those who live at the farm during the week, and those who work by the day. Describing the life of one of the first category, he says—

The workman hires a little brick house with 25 *ares* of land (2975 square yards) at the price of 125 or 150 francs a-year. He cultivates half the soil for rye, the rest for a crop of potatoes. The latter serve for home consumption. He has the rye ground, and mixes it with the wheat flour

which he buys to make his bread.' The straw serves as litter for the two pigs which he rears yearly, and also furnishes the manure necessary for his garden. His wife does the work. He helps her himself on Saturday afternoon, also on Sundays in the spring, when the work is hardest. He goes to the farm on Monday morning and returns on Saturday evening, receiving his board and lodging at his master's house. The average salary of this class of workman is 25 francs a-month in winter and 35 francs in summer. On an average they receive 390 francs, or a trifle under £16 a-year. They only draw their pay twice a-year, and prefer to leave it under the farmer's care. The first half they receive on All Saints' Day, and the remainder upon the 1st of May.

On All Saints' Day the workman pays the rent of his house and land, about 125 francs, and buys about 25 francs' worth of coal as provision for the coming winter. He then proceeds to invest in some blankets and clothes. A blanket costs 3 francs, a pair of sheets the same amount, and the material for a man's suit 12 francs. His wife makes up the suit, which would cost 17 francs ready-made at the shop. But it is on the 210 francs which he receives on the 1st of May that the greatest economy is effected. For it must not be forgotten that he finds at his own house almost everything necessary to his household. His garden procures for him potatoes, vegetables, and bread. He kills one of his two pigs and cures it for home consumption, thus obtaining the lard to spread on his bread and the meat which he requires for his household. The other pig is sold for 100 or 125 francs, and as it has cost its owner only 15 francs, or perhaps less, his profits are thus sufficiently good to permit the housewife to procure such clothes or other articles as she may consider necessary. The young pigs are bought in May and fed on thistle roots, which are very nourishing,

and on ground rye-bran, as well as on the scraps of the household. A small profit is also made by selling the eggs of the few fowls which may be kept. These households live with great economy, and save, it is said, about 150 francs a-year.

But it must be noted that the workman receives certain gratuities according to the custom of the country, which enable him to drink one or two glasses of beer on Sundays, or perhaps further increase his economies at the savings-bank. The children begin to assist the parents as soon as they have grown sufficiently. When thirteen years old they go to work at the farm, receiving board and lodging, together with wages of 6 or 7 francs a-month, which are soon increased to 10 or 12, while at fifteen they may earn 15 francs a-month if industrious. They take their wages to their parents, although these not unfrequently go and receive them instead.

It is in this way, then, that, thanks to their innate good qualities, such households are able to save 150 francs a-year. Suppose that they only save 100, they will at the end of four years have amassed savings to the amount of 400 francs, sufficient to enable them to buy for ready money 240 square yards of ground, to have a house built there worth 2000 francs, and to pay for the expenditure. If the workman at this period is twenty-five years old, and guarantees by insurance the repayment of his debt in twenty-five years' time, he will have to pay the sum of about 148 francs a-year. The savings which he will continue to put by each year will permit him to acquire the sum necessary for purchasing the small property which he cultivates, and even more.

The registered value of a house of this kind will be low enough to claim exemption from taxes, and at the age of fifty or fifty-five he will have ceased to pay any rent.

Let us turn now to the other labourer, who works only by the day. This man lives at home. He gains 2 francs 50 centimes a-day in winter, and 3 francs 50 centimes, or 4 francs, in summer. He obtains his drink, but not food, at the farm where he works. He asks for holidays to beat his grain, and has often a better crop than the first-named class of labourer, who has no manure but that from the pig-sty. He often possesses a cow. To keep a cow in this district, one must have a hectare of ground (about 9 roods) at one's disposal. The wife makes cheese and butter with the milk, and goes to market twice a-week to sell them. In this same category we find the labourer who occupies a rather easier position, approaching that of a small cultivator. Such a one keeps not only his cow but a calf as well. He has a sow, and with the help of the whey from the cow he is enabled to bring up the young pigs. He cultivates his garden, and after a time ceases to go out as a day-labourer. When hard pressed he asks the farmer to lend him a hand, and repays him by working for him during harvest-time. One day's labour on the part of the farmer is repaid by two and a half on the part of the man.

In the district of Hekelgem and Esschene (near Alost) the tillage, wages, and conditions of existence are different from those which we have just seen. By the side of important agricultural undertakings we find the cultivation of the hop, which is only practised by country workmen and small cultivators. There are no industries in this district, a circumstance which has its effect upon the wages of the labourer. At Esschene the labourer who inhabits the farm gains from 18 to 20 francs a-month and his food; the boys of twelve to fifteen years old, 10 to 12 francs a-month. The day-labourer works much at home, for he hires from one to two acres, and thus grows a quantity of hops, which he cultivates with the help of his wife and children. He

keeps a cow and helps at the harvest, receiving one sheaf in twenty-five as wages. Thus he gets the corn to feed himself, and the straw to make the litter for the cow and provide the manure necessary for the ground. The barley and oats are sold to the brokers. In five or six weeks' harvest he makes 150 to 180 francs. This is his greatest profit. At ordinary times he is paid by the farmer at the rate of 70 centimes a-day in summer and 60 centimes in winter, besides his food. In the winter he threshes in the barn.

Baron Royer de Dour goes on to describe the excellent position of the labourers at Machelen, some miles from Ghent, where the neighbourhood of a large town and certain industries ensure work for all, and maintain wages at a scale sufficiently high to be remunerative.

The culture in this district is much divided, as no large farms exist; most of the labourers are half farmers themselves. The wife cultivates the small field adjoining the house, and finds there the vegetables necessary for the household and the food for the heifer or cow which they keep. These she sends in summer to the free pasture in the meadows belonging to the commune. She reckons that the heifer gains about 100 francs in value every year. The profits which she makes, when she sells the animal, at the end of three years, go to swell the savings of the household. The wages of the father, added to the work of the mother, assure to the family the possession of everything of which they may stand in need.

The houses are of brick and well built, and there are no paupers in the commune. But here, more than anywhere else, everything depends on the activity and skill of the

housewife; even if the husband is the model of a clever and courageous workman, he cannot succeed without the help of his wife.

Basing upon the success of the commune of Machelen and other thriving neighbourhoods, Baron Royer de Dour is a great advocate for the extension of a system which aims at aiding the labourer to become the proprietor of his dwelling in the first place, and the owner of a little land in addition afterwards.

## V

The Socialists and the Liberals often accuse the Catholics, who have held the reins of Government in Belgium during the last sixteen years, of having done little to advance the general interests of the country, and more particularly those of the working classes. Looking at the question as an impartial observer, I cannot say that this accusation appears to me to be justified by the facts.

A Commission of Labour, inaugurated as far back as 1886, resulted in the establishment of councils of industry and labour. Boards of arbitration under Government supervision also were formed, in order thoroughly to thresh out all differences which might arise between master and man. The Superior Council of Labour, created in 1892, was a further development of the same idea. This institution, said to be the only one of its kind in the world, is com-

posed of sixteen workmen, sixteen manufacturers, and sixteen representatives of science. The province of these councillors is to fathom questions of interest to the working classes which are likely later on to come before Parliament, so that they may be carried out with all the greater efficiency and despatch.

The Ministry of Industry and Labour, created so recently as 1895, organises the efforts of a number of inspectors, whose work consists in making inquiry into questions of social import, whether at home or abroad, such as Sunday-closing, technical education, old-age pensions, and the like, thereby paving the way for future legislation.

By recent laws the custom of paying wages in taverns and otherwise than in coin of the realm has practically disappeared, while the regulations with regard to fines in factories and the maintenance of conditions suitable to health would appear to be properly observed.

By a law of December 1889 twelve years was fixed as the minimum age for industrial labour. Youths of less than sixteen, and women and girls of less than twenty-one years of age, may not be employed during more than twelve hours a-day, including a rest of at least one and a half hours. There must be one day's rest in seven, nor are women of under twenty-one years of age permitted to work in mines. According to M. Ghélin, the limit of age is respected absolutely. In 1896 there were forty-eight offences only against this law, which affected 43,000 women and children,



and only fourteen against the article respecting the week-day rest. The number of women employed in the mines appears to have diminished considerably since the law came into force; and the same may be said with regard to the number of workers under sixteen years of age. The law forbidding those under age to participate in night labour would appear to be somewhat frequently broken in the pottery-factories, and in these cases it seems desirable that severer measures should be taken.

The Act of 1888 relative to the inspection of unhealthy or dangerous factories, and providing for the due supervision of engines and boilers, has been already instrumental in preserving many lives which otherwise would have been sacrificed. Every month the 'Revue du Travail' publishes a list of accidents, which usually are 20 per cent more on Mondays than on the other days of the week. Certainly, to judge by the portentous length of the Belgian liquor bill, it could scarcely be a matter for surprise if accidents were of more frequent occurrence. Similarly the mines are under the supervision of a body of inspectors, chosen from among the colliers themselves. These are obliged to pay at least eighteen visits a-month to the mines, with the object of ascertaining their security, and while occupied in the exercise of their duties are efficiently protected by law.

Since 1887 the Government have done much to encourage thrift, and by the erection of artisans' dwellings have succeeded in enabling the workman

to become the possessor of a house of his own. Much has been done to foster agriculture by means of district schools for instruction in farming, and most of all by the numerous light railways or tram-



THE WELL.

From a drawing by Hyppolyte Boulenger.

ways which the Government are constructing in the most remote corners of the kingdom. With the view of furthering the exportation of agricultural produce, M. Vandenpeereboum, when Minister of Railways,

created rapid services of trains to England, and even to Russia. The Belgians, indeed, are sanguine enough to look forward to the day when the produce of their dairies may rival that of Denmark in the London market.

Although the wages of the Belgian artisan have more than doubled within the last forty years, and those of the farm labourer also have increased, though not in the same proportion, there is still much room for improvement in the condition of the latter. According to the last agricultural census, that of 1895, over 40 per cent of the persons engaged in that pursuit were women. The average wages paid to men were, without food, about 1s. 7d. a-day, and with food 11½d. a-day, corresponding to 9s. 6d. and 5s. 10d. per week of six days. Women earned on the average about 11¾d. without food, and 7d. with food, or about 5s. 10d. and 3s. 7d. per week respectively. Wages differed considerably in different provinces, varying from an average of 11s. 8d. a-week in Namur to 6s. 11d. in Limburg. Women's wages, however, were highest in the province of Luxembourg and lowest in East Flanders. Comparison with 1890, five years previously, appears to show that these wages have risen generally by an average of 1d. per week during the period throughout most of the kingdom. Only in West Flanders is a decline recorded, while in the province of Luxembourg there has been an increase of something like 6d. a-week. Probably the measures which the Government are taking for the amelioration of the condition of the

farm labourer will bear fruit in a further rise in wages in the not far-distant future.

In the matter of general education Belgium would seem to be quite up to the level of our own country. The schools resemble rather the *lycées* and seminaries of France than the public schools of England, while those active amusements and sports which are with us perhaps the too predominant features of university life, are in Belgium practically non-existent. The university student of Liège or Ghent would hardly appreciate, or indeed comprehend, the picture of the golden days of the summer term at Oxford—

“ When wickets are bowled and defended,  
When Isis is glad with the eights,  
When music and sunset are blended,  
When youth and the summer are mates ;  
When freshmen are heedless of ‘ Greats,’  
When note-books are scribbled with rhyme,  
Ah ! these are the hours that one rates  
Sweet hours, and the fleetest of time.”

Neither would the diversions of the beer-swilling, roystering student of Heidelberg or Jena, with his face disfigured for life by the inglorious scars of otherwise harmless duels, be much more to his taste. In return for a very moderate expenditure the Belgian receives an education such as befits the career in life upon which he intends to enter, and there being fewer distractions in his case—cycling and music are almost his sole diversions—he has ample time for study. Certainly the rather unfair reproach brought by Mr Froude against the English schools and universities,

that after the expenditure of hundreds of pounds they turn out a man in the condition of being unable to earn a sixpence, could not be laid to the charge of those of Belgium. As in other countries the entrances into the learned professions are thronged with many aspirants. For a young man of good family the army or the law are considered almost the only alternative professions. The law appears to be extremely crowded, and the prizes dangled before its followers are neither numerous nor large. Many of the barristers practise journalism, and I may remark that I have noticed within the last fifteen years a great improvement in the tone and standard of the Belgian press. In the Church, in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations, high ideals of life and work would seem to be entertained. I am informed, indeed, on excellent authority, that in matters of ceremonial the Belgian Church is looked upon and followed as a model by the Romanists of other lands. The Protestant clergy make too small a body to be taken much account of; but they, as well as the Roman Catholic priests, are apparently not unmindful of the duties of their sacred calling. It is scarcely necessary to say that from two classes of clergy, the habitual dancer and the parson who rides to hounds three or four times a-week, Belgium is absolutely free. While, however, the Church preserves a proper sense of her dignity and her duty, it is impossible to accord the same praise to the proceedings of the Belgian House of Commons, which of recent years has

become the scene of unseemly disputes, recalling the turbulent rowdyism of the Irish obstructives in our own Parliament. These disturbances, in which uncomplimentary epithets have been bandied about as freely as they were in England in the last century, when an honourable member designated the Prime Minister, Lord North, to the House as a "fat pig," are the outcome of the mistaken policy of the Socialists, who, few in number, endeavour to make their presence felt by a copiousness of invective which is very far from being conducive to the best interests of their own party or to those of the State.

Belgium is a young country, and one which is now passing through a probationary period of storm and stress. From this she is likely to emerge happily, if only she remember in the future, as in the past, to act up to and to justify her well-chosen motto—"L'union fait la force."



MAISON DE ROI, BRUSSELS.

## HOW BELGIUM IS GOVERNED

THE separation of Belgium from the neighbouring kingdom of Holland is of comparatively recent date. It may be well to glance for a moment at the causes which led to it.

Notwithstanding that William I. of Holland had fostered Belgian industry, extending the influence of the ports of Antwerp and Ghent and protecting the rising industries of Verviers, Liège, and other towns, still in the distribution and representation of taxation he was undoubtedly not just. Belgium, with three millions of inhabitants, and Holland with less than two millions, sent the same number of deputies to the States-General, which held its sessions at the Hague. Moreover, in order to pay off the large debt of Holland, the Belgians were overloaded with taxes, those being especially irksome which affected the supplies of bread and meat. Government posts as well as commissions in the army were accorded the Dutch by preference; so that, for example, of 117 officials of the Ministry of the Interior, eleven only were Belgians, while of 1573 infantry officers, only 274 were of that nationality.

Nor did King William pay much heed to the Constitution of the kingdom. On his own responsibility he decreed the abolition of the jury and of the publicity of legal debates; and, in addition, suspended the liberty of the press, and condemned to exile those who defended the rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

It was impossible for the country to tolerate such a violation of its privileges. In 1828 a union was founded by citizens of all parties to petition the king against this injustice, and to ask for the dismissal of the unpopular Minister, Van Maanen, who was regarded as its author. But William, like his prototype George III. in his treatment of the American colonies, turned a deaf ear to all entreaties. Moreover, he treated the press with even greater rigour than before. The outbreak of the July revolution in Paris, which overturned the throne of Charles X., inspired the opposition with greater confidence. The spark had fallen, the conflagration was soon to spread. On August 25 the "Muette de Portici" was played in the Théâtre de la Monnaie at Brussels. The refrain,

"Amour sacré de la Patrie,  
Rends nous l'audace et la fierté,"

was received with a paroxysm of frenzy. Ardent spirits outside the theatre caught up the air, and, translating thought into action, made off in crowds to the houses of Van Maanen and the chief Orange



Ministers, which they sacked amidst wild enthusiasm.

A Dutch army commanded by William's sons failed to overawe the revolted Belgians. The arrival of 300 men of Liège under Rogier encouraged their Brabançon comrades to persevere. A sanguinary conflict ensued in the park at Brussels, opposite the royal palace. After four days' fighting the Dutch army withdrew from the town under cover of night. Then the Belgians rose in a body, and by the beginning of October Maestricht and Antwerp alone remained in the possession of the Dutch. Entering Antwerp, the Belgians drove the Dutch garrison into the citadel; whereupon General Chassé, its commander, bombarded the town for some hours, kindling a great fire that caused immense destruction.

A provisional government formed at the end of September paved the way for the National Congress of November 1830. This body of 200 members inaugurated the Belgian Constitution, modelled chiefly on that of Great Britain, and ultimately, in June 1831, proceeded to the election of a sovereign, in the person of Leopold, Prince of Saxe-Coburg. Their choice had fallen upon one worthy of their suffrage. The Prince of Saxe-Coburg had early given evidence of those qualities which procured for him in later years the designation of the wisest king in Christendom. In his youth he had been spoken of by Napoleon as "the finest young man whom I have seen at the Tuileries." As a commander of

Russian cavalry he had played no mean part on the fatal field of Leipsic, and to the English nation he had endeared himself as the husband of the unfortunate Princess Charlotte.

Such was the monarch who was called to preside over the destinies of Belgium. His promise on the occasion of his enthronement, "I swear to observe the Constitution and the laws of the Belgian people, and to maintain the national independence and integrity of territory," was faithfully observed.

The loss of the Belgian provinces, however, still rankled in the breast of William of Holland. On the 2nd of August 1831 a Dutch army of 50,000 men crossed the frontier; to confront it, Leopold possessed but 25,000 men, and these badly equipped and imperfectly trained. He evinced, however, considerable qualities as a general, falling back on Louvain, and protecting the capital, until the arrival of a French army caused the Dutch to retire. As William still refused to give up the citadel of Antwerp, the Great Powers were forced to intervene. An English fleet appeared off the coast of Holland, and a French army commanded by Marshal Gérard laid siege to the citadel. After three weeks' desperate resistance, during which the town of Antwerp suffered much, the Dutch general, Chassé, capitulated, and the Belgian army took possession of Antwerp in October 1832.

Thenceforward the career of the young kingdom under Leopold was one of constant prosperity. Even the year of revolution—1848—which shook almost

every throne in Europe, was powerless to affect that of Belgium. It is true, as Roland reminds us, that many French revolutionists endeavoured to force their way into Belgium; but they were defeated near Mouscron, and the event only served to strengthen the fidelity of the people towards their monarch. Reforms and improvements of all kinds graced the new reign. The army was placed on a better footing, and the Order of Leopold was created as a reward of merit. Four universities—those of Ghent, Liège, Brussels, and Louvain—were founded. The year 1850 saw the inauguration of the National Bank, and at about the same period Leopold gave his assent to the law on “*enseignement moyen*,” creating ten royal *athénées*, and fifty *écoles moyennes* (middle schools). The octrois were abolished; and three years later freedom of navigation was secured to the Schelde.

In 1832 Leopold had married Louise Maria, daughter of King Louis Philippe. Of the children of this union three still survive—Leopold, Duke of Brabant, now King of the Belgians, born at Brussels on April 9, 1835; Philip, Comte de Flandre, born in 1838; and the Princess Charlotte, afterwards wife of the ill-starred Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, born in 1840. At length, on December 10, 1865, this reign, so rich in blessings to the kingdom, came to an end, and Leopold, amid every sign of a nation's grief, was laid in the church at Laeken, by the side of his consort, who had died in 1850.

Leopold II., the present King of the Belgians, attained his majority in 1853, at the age of eighteen, and entering the Senate at once took an active part in the work of that assembly. In the same year was celebrated his marriage with Marie-Henrietta, Archduchess of Austria. Succeeding to the throne in December 1865, he has followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, and not only has furthered the development of Belgium at home, but, by creating the important State of the Congo, has provided his country with a valuable outlet for her increasing commerce. The Congo State was recognised by the European Powers, and declared neutral, with Leopold as its sovereign, in 1885.

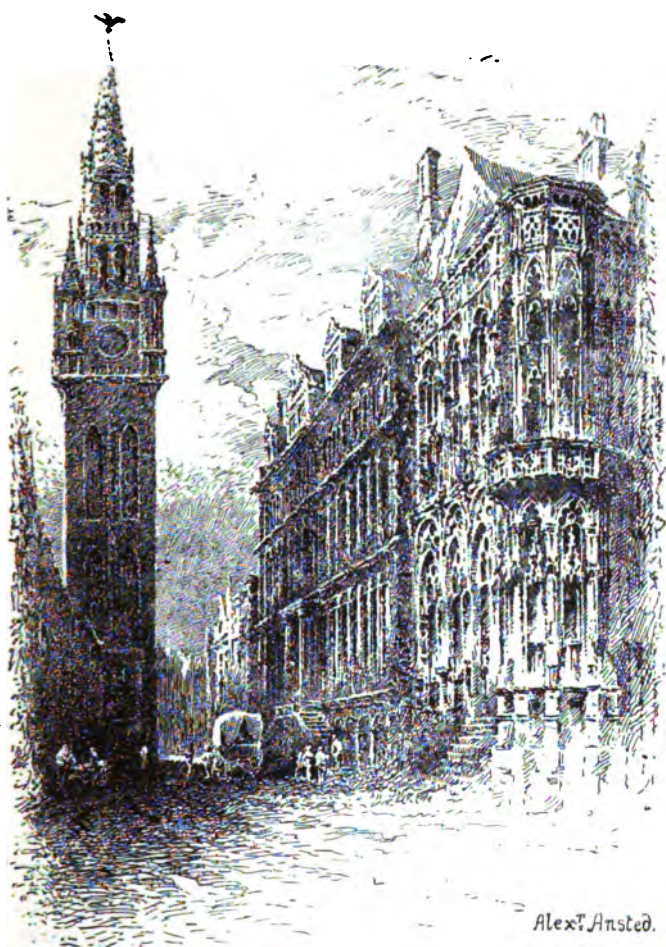
Among the great works undertaken in this reign are the barrage of the Gileppe, destined to furnish water to the factories of Verviers; the improvement of the ports of Brussels, Bruges, and Antwerp; the bridging over of the Senne at Brussels, by which the health of the town has been much improved; and the building of the Bourse, the Palais des Beaux-Arts, and the Palais de Justice in the same city.

In 1880 the fiftieth anniversary of Belgian independence was hailed with further manifestations of joy. Since then King Leopold has continued to deserve, by his thoughtful care for the welfare of his subjects, the goodwill of all loyal Belgians. Sorrow has not been wanting in his life. The death of his son, Prince Leopold, at the age of ten; the calamities of his sister, the Princess Charlotte, whose husband,

the Emperor Maximilian, was so barbarously executed in Mexico; and the more recent and tragic fate of his son-in-law, the Archduke Rudolph of Austria, were surely trials enough for the life of any one man. Yet a further grief was in store for him, in the death of his nephew and heir, Prince Baudouin,—that young Marcellus, reft away at the moment when he seemed likely to realise the promise of his early years. His brother, Prince Albert, a younger son of the Comte de Flandre, is the present heir to the throne.

Many anecdotes are related of King Leopold's kindness of heart. At Ostend he loves to wander dressed in the garb of an ordinary citizen, and converse with the children as they play upon the sands. Sometimes he will enter into conversation with the English and American tourists travelling between Ostend and Brussels, and, himself unrecognised, will endeavour to elicit from them their opinion concerning the country through which they are passing. Few sovereigns have fewer enemies than King Leopold, and he inspires a great affection among his servants and those attached to his court.

Having touched thus briefly upon the reigns of the two sovereigns who have presided over the destinies of Belgium, let us glance at the system of government of the country. This is a limited monarchy, modelled mainly on the British constitution. The king is the commander of the forces, both by land and by sea. He declares war and makes treaties



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of peace, alliance, and commerce; but commercial treaties, and those which bind the State or Belgians individually, can have no effect until they have received the assent of the two Chambers. The king sanctions and publishes the laws. The two Chambers meet every year in November, unless they have been previously called together by the king; and they must hold concurrent session during at least four days of every year. The king pronounces the close of the session, and with him lies the right of convoking the Chambers should the exigencies of the State demand such an action. He has the power also of dissolving Parliament, but the Act of Dissolution provides for the convocation of the electors within forty days, and of the House within two months. In the same manner he may adjourn the Parliament for a month, but only once during the same session. The prerogative of mercy is in his hands. No powers are accorded him beyond those which the Constitution permits, and the civil list is prescribed by law for the duration of each reign.

The kings of Belgium are considered to have attained their majority when they have reached the age of eighteen, nor do they take possession of the throne until after they have pronounced in the presence of the united Chambers the solemn oath, "I swear to observe the Constitution and laws of the Belgian people, and to maintain the national independence and the integrity of the territory." Provision is made for a regency, in the event of the king

being a minor, or in the case of a sovereign being judged incapable of performing his royal duties.

The members of the two Chambers represent the nation, and not merely the province, or subdivision of a province, which has elected them. The sittings of the Chambers are public; but, notwithstanding this, each Chamber can form itself into a secret committee on the demand of its Speaker or of ten members. A member of either Chamber appointed by the Government to a post to which a salary is attached, vacates his seat on accepting the same, and can only resume his duties as member on being re-elected by his constituents. At every session each Chamber names its Speaker and other officials. A majority of votes is necessary to pass a resolution; and should the number of votes be equal, the measure is at once rejected. Nor can either of the Chambers pass a resolution except when a majority of the members is present.

No member of either Chamber can be prosecuted for the opinions or votes which he has expressed or recorded in the exercise of his functions, nor, save in cases of flagrant misbehaviour, can he be prosecuted or arrested during the session, save with the authority of the Chamber to which he belongs.

To be eligible for election as a member of the Lower House, or Chamber of Representatives, the candidate must be Belgian by birth, or must have become a naturalised citizen. He must enjoy civil and political rights, have reached twenty-five years of



age, and be domiciled in Belgium. No other condition can be required of him. Members are elected for four years. Half of them are renewed every two years, in the order determined by the electoral law; and in the event of a dissolution the whole House must be renewed. Members of the Chamber of Representatives (save those residing in Brussels) enjoy a salary of 433 francs, paid monthly, during the duration of the session. The number of deputies depends upon the population, proportional representation being secured by the Act of 1900. At the present time the *Chambre des Représentants* contains 172 members.

As regards the electors, universal male suffrage obtains in Belgium, with plural voting up to three votes, according to property or educational qualifications.

The Upper House, or Senate, is composed of rather more than half as many members as sit in the Lower House. To be eligible as a senator a candidate must be at least forty years of age, and pay 2116 francs in direct taxes. Senators are elected for eight years by the same citizens who elect the members of the Lower House, but, unlike the latter, have no salary attached to their office. In 1900 there were 102 senators.

The laws of the Constitution, as they refer to the duties of Ministers, are equally explicit. Only Belgians or naturalised subjects appointed by the king can be Ministers, and no member of the royal

family can hold office. A Minister has the right of entrance into either House, but he has a voice in the deliberation of that House only of which he happens to be a member. In no case can the order of the king, whether verbal or in writing, diminish the responsibility of his Minister.

The Lower House has the right of impeaching Ministers, and of bringing them before the Cour de Cassation, which alone has the power to proceed against them, save in a case in which a Minister may have committed a crime or offence not connected with the exercise of his office. The penalty to be inflicted and the method of procedure must be determined by law, nor can the king pardon a Minister condemned by the Cour de Cassation, except on the demand of one of the two Houses.

The departments over which the Ministers preside are seven in number. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs deals with the general control of politics, the supervision of foreign commerce, consulates, &c. The Ministry of the Interior and of Public Instruction is concerned with matters relating to the communes and provinces, the control of the *garde civique* and militia, as well as the administration of the education of the kingdom, and the supervision of science, literature, and the fine arts. Under the charge of the Minister of Justice come legacies, donations, and matters appertaining to religious legislation, benevolent institutions, prisons, public safety, judicial costs, &c. The Ministry of Finance has control

of the public purse, national debt, custom-house dues, savings-banks, and retiring pensions, &c. The Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Public Works provides for the administration of agriculture, of the woods, forests, and rivers, and the wellbeing of the industrial classes and of their industries in general. The supervision of roads, bridges, and mines all come under its care, as well as questions of sanitation, the inspection of weights and measures, and the like. The duties of the Minister for War require no explanation, but it may surprise some who know little of the country to learn that such State navy as exists in Belgium—namely, the Ostend mail-boats and a few small vessels—fall within the province of the Minister of Railways, who acts also as Postmaster-General for the kingdom. Ministers who direct a department are designated Ministers with Portfolio, and receive a salary of £840 a-year. The king can choose in addition an unlimited number of Ministers who receive no pay, and are regarded as counsellors of the Crown, much after the fashion of our members of the Privy Council in England.

The rights of the people are defined with great clearness in the Belgian Constitution. All Belgians are equal in the eyes of the law, and they alone can be admitted to civil and military employment, excepting in cases where a special law is passed to meet contingencies. The liberty of the individual is sufficiently safeguarded. No one can be prosecuted or have his dwelling entered by the police

except in certain cases foreseen by the law ; nor can any one be deprived of his property save for the benefit of the public, and then only with due regard to compensation for the loss incurred. I propose to give in later chapters a more particular account of Religion and Education in Belgium ; here I need only note that religion is free, and that the State has no power to interfere in the appointment of ministers of religion, whatsoever their form of worship may be. The ministers of the different denominations are paid by the State, which also exercises a certain control in the distribution of the revenues of the parishes and cathedrals. Education, too, is free ; and so, unfortunately, is the Press, which at the moment when I write is full of the misstatements and falsehoods of the pro-Boer party. The establishment of a censorship is forbidden by the Constitution, but is none the less desirable on that account.

In marriages the civil ceremony before the mayor at the Town Hall must always precede the nuptial benediction in the church.

The Belgians have the right to assemble together and to form clubs or societies as they please, without interference on the part of the Government, but, of course, meetings whose objects are contrary to law or threaten the maintenance of public order are not tolerated. A citizen is allowed to adopt either language (French or Flemish) when pleading in the law courts ; in the legislative chambers also

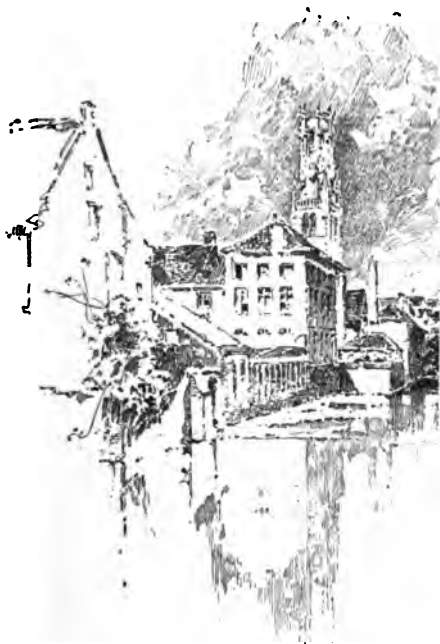
both languages are permissible, though in practice French is held to be the parliamentary tongue.

While such are the rights of the individual, the powers granted by the constitution emanate from the nation alone. The legislative power is exercised collectively by the king and the senate; but notwithstanding this, all laws relating to the receipts or expenses of the State, or to the maintenance of the army, must first be passed by the representatives of the Lower House.

The judicial power is exercised by the courts and tribunals, their decrees and judgments being carried out in the name of the king. It is upheld by the principle that the judge once appointed is independent and immovable, unless he show himself unworthy of his position. In that case he may be dismissed by the votes of his coadjutors.

The first judicial body of the country is the Cour de Cassation, whose duty it is to assure itself that the decisions of the lower courts are in accordance with the law. If a judgment has infringed the law the Cour de Cassation annuls it. It is this jurisdiction which is called upon to try Ministers who have been deemed guilty of an infringement of the law. The magistracy is divided into two classes: the *magistrature assise*, who remain seated while speaking; and the *magistrature debout*, who speak standing. The former comprises judges and councillors; the second, certain public officials who are

called upon to give their advice in civil cases, and to prosecute for various crimes and offences committed. The judges are appointed by the king, who makes a selection from a double list presented by



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one of the courts and by the provincial councils, and (in the case of the Cour de Cassation) by the Senate. Members of the magistracy who have reached the age limit, or, on account of infirmity, are unable

to perform their duties, receive a retiring pension equal to their former salary. Excepting in cases where it might be considered subversive of public order or morality, all legal causes must be tried in public; and the judgments must be delivered publicly with the reasons for them.

Lawsuits between individuals are brought before the Court of the Juge de Paix, the Tribunals of First Instance, and the Court of Appeal. Each judicial division in Belgium possesses a Juge de Paix. The tribunals of "first instance" are twenty-six in number, and sit in large towns such as Brussels, Louvain, and Antwerp. In the case of a crime, the accused person is brought before the Cour d'Assises. The Courts of Appeal, three in number, hold their session at Brussels, Ghent, and Liège. A jury of twelve is required in all criminal cases as well as for cases arising out of political offences and those connected with the Press; and, as in our own country, it is the duty of the jury to say whether the accused be guilty or not, and the province of the court to pronounce sentence.

Besides these courts, Tribunals of Commerce are established in the important towns; and should there be no such court in a district, a matter in dispute will come instead before the Tribunal of First Instance. These Tribunals of Commerce are composed of traders or of former traders who have practised their calling creditably during a period of at least five years. Soldiers in the army are brought before a military

tribunal—either a council of war or a military court, according to the rank of the offender. Councils of war are composed of seven officers; while a military court is presided over by a councillor of the Court of Appeal, the other members, with the exception of the clerk, being military men.

In connection with these courts-martial a Belgian officer of my acquaintance related to me the following anecdote of a trial that came under his own observation. A soldier was charged with desertion. The barrister pleading on his behalf in extenuation of the offence urged vehemently that the young man had been led away by the influence of companions who had deserted with him. The colonel at once interrupted the lawyer with the words, "Hold your tongue, sir, or otherwise I shall be forced to condemn the prisoner to death." The barrister, as a civilian, either did not know or had forgotten that the man who deserts on his own responsibility is guilty of a comparatively small offence, calling for no greater punishment than a brief imprisonment, whereas the soldier who deserts with others is liable by the Belgian code to the extreme penalty of the law.

Each of the nine provinces of Belgium has its own system of self-government. These provinces are further divided into communes, grouped together by arrondissements. The provincial councils deal with all matters that affect the province, and are composed of councillors elected by citizens who



pay 20 francs to the State in direct taxes. They assemble of their own right on the first Tuesday in July at the chief towns in the provinces. The king also has the power of convoking them together, should circumstances demand such action. The session of the provincial councils must not exceed four weeks in length, for it is not considered desirable that those bodies should trespass upon the functions of the Houses of Parliament. They have, however, the power of choosing certain members from their own body to act as a kind of committee for the transaction of provincial business outside the period of session. The committee is termed the "permanent deputation." The governor of each province acts as a kind of intermediary between the council and the central government. He is appointed by the king, and presides over the permanent committee, and takes part in its decisions.

Next to the provincial councils come the communal or parish organisations, which are composed of councillors chosen by the electors of the commune. To be an elector a man must be in the habit of paying not less than 10 francs a-year in taxes. The administrative body in each commune is a "college of aldermen," formed of the mayor and aldermen. The mayor, who acts as chairman of the communal council, is the head of the commune, and is chosen by the king for a term of ten years. The aldermen are appointed by the communal council, the decisions of which are carried out by the college of aldermen.

The mayor is head of the police of the district, and under his control and that of the communal council comes everything which concerns the wellbeing of the village, the granting of certificates for births, deaths, and marriages also falling within their sphere.

The more important acts of the communal councils cannot be carried out until they have received the approval of the Government, or of the permanent committee of the provincial council. The communes are placed to a certain degree under the supervision of the "commissaires d'arrondissement," — officers appointed for the purpose by the provincial council. This, as M. Auguste Panten observes in his instructive little work, '*Droits et Devoirs du Citoyen belge*,' is a great safeguard against too hasty action on the part of ignorant men in country districts, who otherwise might be tempted to use their power to the detriment of the society in which they live.

In this manner the 2600 communes of Belgium are kept under the control of the superior legislative bodies of the land.

We will now glance at that part of the Constitution which deals with the finances of the nation. No duty or tax can be levied in a commune and in a province without the consent of their respective councils, while a special law must be passed in order to raise a tax for the benefit of the State. All State taxes must be voted annually, and the laws which

establish them must be renewed, otherwise they fall to the ground.

Taxation is of two kinds, direct and indirect. The direct taxes are those which citizens pay in proportion to the estimated value of their goods and rent. They are divided into various categories: the *contribution foncière*, on immovable goods; the *contribution personnelle*, on the value of houses and fixtures of dwellings; and the *patente*, or stamp duty, which affects persons exercising certain professions and industries. These direct taxes are only counted in order to estimate the electoral census—that is to say, to determine the property qualification of an elector. The indirect taxes are chiefly custom-house dues collected on certain merchandise coming from abroad, registry fees, stamp, and succession duties.

To check in some measure the actions of those who control the State finances, there is a committee termed the *Cour des Comptes*, composed of a chairman, six councillors, and a clerk. These are named by the Chamber of Representatives, and take care that the funds placed at the disposition of the public authorities are employed for the purposes for which they have been voted. The committee audits the accounts of the different State departments, and has the right of refusing its *visa*, or approval, in cases where payment has been made irregularly. Should the Ministers dispense with the *visa* of the *Cour des Comptes*, they do so on their own responsibility, and are obliged to account for their action to the Legis-

lature. A duplicate of the great book of the national debt is deposited at the court, which takes care that all transfers, repayments, or fresh laws are duly recorded. A registry of State pensions also is kept by it, as well as an account of all loans made to the Ministers of Agriculture and Public Works, and other officials of the kingdom. Moreover, the court receives from the heads of departments a detailed account of all rents and properties belonging to the State.

In order to minimise the risk of any favouritism on the part of the officials, provision is made that no persons may be chosen members of the court who are related to one another, or to a Minister, or to the head of a government department. They must not be members of either legislative chamber, nor fill any post salaried by the Treasury, or one in any way responsible to the State. Besides, members of the court are forbidden to carry on any business, or to participate in the management of any company or industrial concern.

The Cour des Comptes has no holidays, and is divided for working purposes into two sections, each composed of three councillors. Every six months a change is made from one section to another, so that each councillor is called upon to sit in both sections during the first year. The first section is occupied with the general control and verifying of the State and provincial budgets; the other is concerned with the national debt, the payment of pensions, and the auditing of public accounts generally.

The policing of the towns is under the control of the mayor, subject to the authority of the Minister of Justice. The police force of Brussels consists of 1 chief-commissioner, 6 commissioners, 10 assistant-inspector-commissioners, and 34 assistant-commissioners; under whom—I quote from the 'Almanach Royal'—are 46 special agents de police, 60 agent-inspectors, 14 judicial agents, 159 agents of the first class, 79 of the second, and 90 of the third.

There are a central division and six territorial divisions defined by numbers. The duties of the central division are the supervision of everything which has to do with the control exercised by the assistant-inspector-commissioners and the inspectors, the transmission of the mayors' orders to the divisions of police, the getting up of judicial cases, the correspondence concerning the police regulations with regard to foreigners, and the control of the communal prison. In addition to these duties may be mentioned others, such as the search for stolen objects at the pawnbrokers' and old-clothes shops; the watching for pickpockets about railway-stations, theatres, fairs, and other places where such folk congregate; the search after criminals; the supervision of pedlars' licences and cabs; the advertising of objects lost and found: in short, most of those functions which it is the lot of the London police to perform, with the exception of that most important and most difficult of all duties, the proper regulation of vehicular traffic. Perhaps I should have included

this also ; but the slight attention which the Belgian policeman is obliged to devote to the matter scarcely demands notice. The conductors of the steam-trams are only too anxious to avoid accidents, which are frequently due to the carelessness of the victims themselves, and beyond the pulling up of an occasional too active cyclist, the efforts of the police do not seem to be much called for in this direction.

In one respect, however, their work is undoubtedly harder and more dangerous than that of their British *confrère*. The English policeman may receive hard knocks in the execution of his duty, but his life is rarely in danger from the attacks of the criminal classes. His great size and strength are usually in themselves a sufficient protection, except when a burglar may be provided with a revolver, jemmy, or other dangerous implement. But in Belgium, as in France, the use of the revolver is of everyday occurrence, and it is not so much the exception as the rule for a malefactor to be armed with one ; while in any case the comparatively small stature of the Belgian *agent de police* places him at a disadvantage in contending with the large-limbed and turbulent Flemish workman. It is true that the law permits him to employ his small cutlass ; but a glance at that insignificant blade will convince the observer that the British policeman with his truncheon and superior height is the better armed man of the two.

That I have in no way overstated the case will be evident to any one who takes the trouble to run his

eye over the *faits divers* or miscellaneous column of any Brussels newspaper. It will be noted that intervention in drunken brawls, and conflicts with desperate criminals, are only too frequent episodes in the lives of the guardians of the law; and that they do not more frequently come off second best in these struggles can only be ascribed to the plucky and resolute conduct of these smart and reliable officers.

When the criminal has been run to ground and brought to justice, he is placed in one of the three classes of prisons, the Central Prison, the Maison d'Arrêt, or the Maison de Sûreté. The central prisons in Belgium are the penitentiary establishment at Gand, devoted to the detention of certain condemned criminals, and the cellular penitentiary at Louvain, for those who are destined to a life of seclusion and hard labour. In the prison at Gand special quarters are given to young delinquents, and particularly to those whom the State reformatories have found past mending. The Maisons de Sûreté are established in the neighbourhood of every assize court. At Brussels there are three, one for men at St Gilles, another for women at Petits Carmes, and yet another for men in the Rue de Minimes. The Maisons d'Arrêt, or "lock-ups," exist near every tribunal d'arrondissement where there is no Maison de Sûreté.

Each prison has a governing body, consisting of a president and vice-president, named by the king,

and in each case the mayor and the public prosecutor (or "Procureur du Roi," as he is termed) are *ex officio* members of the committee. At the head of each prison are placed a governor and a deputy nominated by the Crown, the other officials and employés being appointed by the Minister of Justice.

Each central establishment possesses a chaplain, a schoolmaster, and a doctor, with as many assistants as each may require. Similarly a chaplain and a doctor are attached to the Maisons de Sûreté and d'Arrêt. Three doctors are employed as specialists in mental disease to visit the different prisons under the control of the Minister of Justice. The women are under the supervision of nuns as well as of female lay-workers. The produce of the work done in the prisons is made use of by the State, and consists chiefly of manufactured goods useful for the army, custom-house employés, and other public officials.

The extreme penalty of death is not inflicted in Belgium, and it is probably partly on this account that murder and crimes of violence are of greater frequency than in most other northern countries of Europe. But as the abuse of alcohol is unquestionably the chief cause of crime demanding capital punishment, it is open to doubt whether the death penalty would be as efficient a deterrent as its advocates contend. Whether the experiment will be tried after the reign of the present king, who is much opposed to Draconian measures, remains to be seen.



All lunatic asylums, whether public or private, must be sanctioned by the State, however few may be the number of the persons under treatment. The chief conditions exacted are that the locality be healthy and that the sexes be kept separate. If any establishment fail to fulfil these conditions it is closed, unless the proprietor conform to the requirements of the law within a reasonable period of time.

Various conditions are laid down with regard to the reception of an inmate in an asylum, such as a request from the parents or the local authorities, or a decision of the permanent deputation of the province. In addition to these, a medical certificate is necessary. Should a cure be effected, the inmate must be set at liberty within five days after his sanity has been certified by the doctor. In this case a criminal lunatic will be sent back to the prison from which he came. Persons wrongly detained as lunatics are not permitted to break their hearts in the dreadful manner so graphically described by Charles Reade in 'Hard Cash,' but are allowed to plead for their liberty before the civil tribunal. Committees of Inspection, as well as an Inspector of Lunacy, exercise a wise control in each arrondissement, and thus act as a further check upon a too hasty decision of doctors and friends.

Perhaps the most singular of these institutions for the insane is the colony at Gheel, near Antwerp. This was formerly directed by the commune, but is

now under the care of the State. A permanent committee, composed of the burgomaster, an alderman, and three members named by the Minister of Justice, occupies itself with placing the insane persons as boarders in various families of the town. The system is said to work well, although almost absolute freedom of action is granted to the lunatics in question. It is quite possible, I am told, to enter a café in the town and to learn from the landlord that you and he are the only persons of sound mind present, although you may have remarked nothing extraordinary in the demeanour of the people about you. Dangerous lunatics of course are excluded from the colony, as well as from that at Lierneux in the province of Liège.

Under the head of "Bienfaisance Publique," or public benevolent institutions, may be classed the Hospices Civils, or establishments which receive those who are in need of assistance. These exist in many of the communes, and are under the supervision of a board of management, composed of five members, whose work consists in admitting or sending away applicants for relief, controlling the expenditure of the funds, and generally directing the whole concern. In each commune a Bureau de Bienfaisance, also composed of five members, undertakes the outdoor relief of the poor, and supervises the work given by the parish to occupy those in receipt of relief.

At Brussels this Bureau is combined with the hospice. The members of the Bureau de Bienfais-

ance are appointed by the permanent deputation of the provincial council. They receive no salary, and personally have nothing to do with the distribution of the funds, which are received by a collector whom they appoint for the purpose. The collector keeps an account of the sums received, but in cases where the amount exceeds 5000 francs, the permission of the Government must be obtained before the gift can be put to any purpose. The Bureaux are permitted to ask for collections in the churches, or to place collecting-boxes in places frequented by the charitable public.

There is an interesting public asylum for the deaf and dumb at Berchem-Sainte-Agathe, near Brussels, and there are some ten or eleven other institutions for the reception of deaf, dumb, and blind persons, conducted by private individuals, in other parts of Belgium. Anvers, Brussels, Bruges, Gand, and Liège all possess one or other of these establishments. Should a commune place any of its pauper children in one of these asylums, it looks as a rule to the State or province for the reimbursement of its expenditure.

In addition to the work of the Bureaux de Bienfaisance in seeking out and relieving the deserving poor, much is done by means of "Dépôts de Mendicité" and Houses of Refuge to suppress the troublesome beggar and vagabond. Everywhere, even in the most remote villages in the country, one may see posted up the notice, "Begging forbidden in the commune of —"; and notwithstanding the evident

poverty of the people in some districts, one is astonished at the paucity of beggars. Naturally I make an exception of Waterloo, and certain other places, where the Anglo-Saxon is deemed fair game by every urchin who covets 10 centimes to buy himself a new toy or a packet of sweets.

By a royal decree of December 1891 the agricultural colony of Bienfaisance at Hoogstraten was destined to receive vagabonds and beggars of the male sex, while the Dépôt de Mendicité at Bruges was set apart for the reception of females. A similar institution for men was founded at Wortel shortly afterwards. There are some 6000 male inmates at Hoogstraten, and according to all accounts the place is by no means in a satisfactory condition, the aggregation of so many vagabonds without sufficient supervision being objectionable from all points of view. As each of these idlers costs the State and province £12 a-year to maintain, we can well believe that efforts are being made to find a remedy for this state of things.

On this point an official document says:—

For many of the sturdy and grown-up vagabonds the official asylums are a school of vice and idleness. To check and restrain the effects of this social sore, it is necessary to render the life of the inmates more severe, and above all to strengthen the moral tone, to develop instruction in the schools, and to employ efficacious measures in harmony with the progress realised by modern studies in prison management. It would be necessary, besides, to

see the inmates classed in two categories, the one composed of town beggars and the other of country vagabonds. The labour in the workshop should be reserved for the first-named, and confined to the needs of these institutions, in order not to increase the competition with free labour. The country vagrants could be specially occupied with field-labour. This system has the merit of only requiring a more judicious division of the vagabond population, without entailing any new pecuniary sacrifice upon the State or the communes.

The 'Petit Bleu,' discussing the matter, remarks that the ideal plan would be to leave to the communes the option of placing the vagrants in farmhouses, where, being comparatively few in number, they will become the object of a more attentive supervision. It cites, moreover, the free workmen's colony, founded by M. de Quéker at Hoeren, as the pattern after which such houses should be modelled. Although this institution receives no subsidy from the town of Brussels, and has only recently been started, it has already provided food and lodging for almost 200 beggars who previously had been living in the Dépôts de Mendicité at the expense of the town. It is said that several who had frequently been punished for begging and vagrancy had lost their habits of idleness and intemperance after having enjoyed the hospitality of the "House of Work" at Hoeren.

Besides this, as the councils of the hospices are able to distinguish between the professional beggar

and the man out of work, the able-bodied poor who seek relief receive tickets from the distributing committee which procure for them ten hours' labour in the workmen's colony at a wage of 2d. an hour. This sum, small as it is, will enable the deserving person to avoid having to receive charity, while the refusal of the professional vagabond to work will probably entail the employment of severer measures.

The hospitals of Belgium are very well managed and arranged, everything being done for the afflicted and injured that humanity can suggest, and the care and skill of physicians or surgeons can carry out. During a visit which I recently paid to the great Hospital of St Jean, which almost faces the traveller as he makes his exit from the Gare du Nord, I had ample opportunity of judging for myself with regard to the attention bestowed upon the sick in that excellent institution.

I had entered the building for the purpose of seeking a friend who had met with a bad accident some weeks before. Arriving from America at the end of June, on the very day of the disturbance occasioned by the protest against the electoral law, he had taken up his abode at the Hotel Bellevue adjoining the Park, and after observing the Garde Civique drawn up to protect the palace, had gone for a drive round the Bois de la Cambre. On his return his foot slipped, and he fell heavily, fracturing his leg in two places. From that day till the commencement of September, when he took his departure

for America, he spent the whole of his time in Brussels upon a bed of sickness, in the Hospital of St Jean, vexed as was but natural at having seen so little of the country, but loud in his praise of the kindness of the doctors and of every one connected with the establishment.

The wards certainly appeared airy and well kept, the nurses neat and zealous, and the inmates apparently quite as cheerful and contented as in our own London hospitals. There are about 600 beds, and, as in England, paying patients are admitted. In addition to the usual complement of physicians, surgeons, and male attendants, there are eighteen nurses and several medical students attached to the hospital.

The Hôpital St Pierre in the Rue Haute with 635 beds, and the Hospice de l'Infirmierie in the Rue du Canal with 460 beds, are also large and well-managed establishments. The latter receives aged persons and poor incurables, who are lodged and fed at the expense of the State. Pensions, too, are granted from the funds of the Bureau de Bienfaisance to some 1250 old men residing at home. Similarly, in the Hospice de Pachéco, fifty ladies of upwards of fifty years of age receive lodging together with a small pension; while provision is made for 140 old women, chiefly wives of shopkeepers and artisans, at the Hospices Réunis in the Rue des Alexiers. Nor are the children uncared for. The hospital in the Rue du Marais contains more

than 700 inmates, some of whom at times are boarded out in the country for the sake of recreation and good air. Children over ten years old receive gratuitous attention at the dispensary attached to this hospital, while vaccination also is provided free of charge. In the Avenue de Cortenberg there is an orphanage where 140 girls are fed, clothed, and instructed in various kinds of work. With a view to assisting them in their search for employment, each of them receives £4 on leaving the establishment.

Besides these public institutions there are others, established by the Royal Society of Philanthropy of Brussels, of which some mention must be made. This society was founded in 1828 by a lawyer, M. Pawels-Devis, and has for its object the prevention of mendicity, as well as the relief of the poor, irrespective of religion and nationality. The society advances money, without interest or other expenditure, to the pensioners of the State, and maintains above 100 blind persons of both sexes in its hospice in the Boulevard du Mardi. Here, too, is a *crèche*, where mothers recommended by members of the society may leave their children under two years of age to be taken care of while they themselves go to work in the town. These *crèches* are a great boon to the poor, and it is a pity that their operations are not widely extended in the more indigent districts of our English towns. The funds of the society are provided by gifts and collections, the proceeds of



concerts and other festivities, in addition to those of an annual lottery.

To become a member of the society a person must subscribe at least 12 francs a-year. A third of the subscriptions is handed over to members of the society to be given away by means of "cards of assistance," a third is applied to the expense of the *crèche* and hospital, while the remaining portion is distributed in relieving the necessities of the poor of Brussels.

Amongst other excellent societies of the same class are the "Association pour secourir les pauvres honteux," and the "Œuvre de l'Hospitalité." The first aids especially those whose necessitous condition is due to sickness or reverse of fortune, while the other devotes itself to the relief of all, without regard to nationality or creed, who from any cause find themselves without food or shelter. Its work is not unlike that undertaken by the Salvation and Church Armies in London, and aims at helping the destitute by every means at its disposal.

"The poor man's banker," as the pawnbroker is often termed in England, is represented in Belgium, as in France, by those useful institutions, the *Monts-de-Piété*. These exist in seventeen towns and are under the control of a committee of five members appointed by the communal council. One member is chosen from the representatives of the *Bureau de Bienfaisance*, another from amongst those of the



**MONT-DE-PIÉTÉ, MECHLIN.**

managing board of hospitals. The sums lent by the Mont-de-Piété amount to three-quarters of the value of the objects deposited, and to four-fifths in the case of articles of gold or silver. Weapons, tools, and other implements necessary for the exercise of a trade are not received as a pledge, neither are bonds and shares, nor church ornaments and vestments, and anything which has to do with religion. If the pledge is not redeemed within the period fixed by the regulations, or renewed by payment of the interest due, it is sold by auction, and the proceeds are placed for two years after the sale at the disposal of the borrower. If after this period has elapsed the money is still unclaimed, it is forfeited for the benefit of the establishment.

The Mont-de-Piété at Brussels was founded in 1618, and so dates back as far as the time of the Archduke and Duchess Albert and Isabella. The rate of interest is 7 per cent on all pledges, without distinction. The profits belong to the institution, but are capitalised with the view of forming a fund to reduce the rate of interest paid by borrowers.

For a town of the size of Brussels the provision made against fire is by no means excessive. The brigade consists of 174 men, who are liable to be called upon, quite apart from their duties as firemen, to assist the police in other services. The aid of what one may term "the amateur firemen" is greatly made use of in case of emergency, and it is not

an uncommon occurrence to find these volunteers seconding with much courage the efforts of the regular *sapeurs-pompier*s and police. A Belgian friend of mine, indeed, is so enthusiastic as a volunteer fireman that his wife on one occasion, dreading lest his zeal should outrun his discretion, locked him up in his room, to his great vexation, for to this cause he attributes the death of one of his own friends who perished in the flames. Decorations are not unfrequently distributed to those who have rendered useful assistance on such occasions.

The post and telegraph services in Belgium come under the control of the Minister of Railways. They are thoroughly well organised, and the delivery of letters and telegrams throughout the country is perfectly satisfactory.

The handsome Central Post Office in the Place de la Monnaie at Brussels is a vast improvement on the older building in the Boulevard Anspach, which, however, was only intended to be of a temporary character. The spacious entrance-hall, with its offices grouped round on either side, prevents overcrowding, even on the busiest of days; and one cannot help feeling that the building, as well as the competence and the civility of the employés, is quite in accordance with the general excellence of the postal service of the kingdom. In the matter of deliveries Brussels is certainly better off than London itself. There are fourteen collections from boxes in the town, and twelve from those in the suburbs daily,

commencing at five in the morning and ending a little before midnight. Most of the work of collecting and forwarding the contents of these boxes falls upon the Central Post Office.

As with ourselves, the labour of the officials is immensely increased at Christmas-time, more particularly on the 31st of December, when the forwarding of New Year's cards and letters taxes their efforts to the utmost. It may interest the reader if I give an account of these operations which appeared, under the pseudonym of "Vidi," in the '*Revue Générale*' for March 1898. The writer is describing the scene as he witnessed it at the Poste Centrale on the evening of December 31, 1897. On that occasion there must have been plenty of work for the extra 214 men, chiefly soldiers, who assisted the ordinary staff of more than 700 persons in dealing with the increased mass of correspondence. It appears that from December 30, 1897, to January 7, 1898, the number of New Year's cards alone amounted to considerably over two millions, being largely in excess of the number for the previous year, thus proving that, whatever may be the case in England, the custom of sending New Year's missives to one's friends is by no means on the decrease in Belgium. In addition to this, the labour of the other departments, such as the parcel post, the work of receiving subscriptions for the newspapers, &c., was enormously increased.

After describing the Salle des Départs, where the

letters are received, stamped with the post-mark, and sorted for distribution to their various destinations at home or abroad, "Vidi" proceeds to describe the Salle des Arrivées, to which all the letters for Brussels itself are conveyed; and this he does in a manner so graphic, in spite of the somewhat commonplace nature of the subject, that I feel bound to give the description in his own words:—

As soon as the letters have received the post-mark they are conveyed to the sorters, who set to work to class them according to districts. This is how the operation is performed. We find ourselves in front of a number of large pigeon-holes, divided into small compartments. Here the compartment represents a postman's beat, or district served by a group of postmen. The postal district of Brussels is divided into 120 groups; there are, therefore, 120 of these little compartments, each of which bears the numbers belonging to the postmen who serve the district to which it refers.

These numbers run from 1 to 497, and the divisions are naturally arranged in numerical order. Now admire the pretty exercise of memory to which the sorters, occupied before the pigeon-holes, have recourse. They hold in their left hand a packet of letters; they take the letters one by one with the right, throw a glance each time at the address of the missive, and immediately with a slight wave of the hand throw the letter into the little division assigned to the district of the person to whom it is addressed.

All the streets in the postal radius of Brussels are grouped together in districts in the head of the sorter, who remembers at the same time the number of the postman corresponding to the particular district required. Thus reading on an

address "Rue Verhas," he sees the number 104 rise at the same instant in his memory; this number is that of the postman of the Rue Verhas, and the letter flies at once into box 104. You have no idea of the speed with which this sorting of letters among the small compartments of the 497 postmen is effected. One never remarks failure of memory, nor any serious amount of hesitation, except when the addresses are barely legible or insufficient.

Many sorters know by heart which streets the persons who usually receive many letters inhabit, and if the letter addressed to one of these does not happen to bear the name of the street, their memory is able to supply the deficiency, and the letter finds its way into the compartment without a minute's delay. On the rare occasions on which the sorter's memory is unable to complete an address, he calls out the name before the distributing postmen, and it is seldom that this is not known to some one or other of the letter-carriers of the district covered.

We have just spoken of letter-carriers. These are the men whose duty it is to distribute the letters at the houses on their list. We see them collected together at one end of the postman's hall. Here, too, are some pigeon-holes divided into smaller divisions. Each of those divisions bears the number of the letter-carrier. They place in each compartment the letters which belong to it, as the result of the selection made by the sorters; thus all the letters thrown by the latter into the division numbered 102 will be placed in the corresponding compartment 102 belonging to the letter-carrier. These take the letters when the hour for their departure strikes. "Strikes" is not the word. On hearing the shrill rattle of the electric bell the carriers hasten to remove the letters from their pigeon-holes, carry them to the table, and begin with great haste to strike them with

the stamp, which impresses the postman's number on the envelope. This makes a clatter of dull thuds on the table—a rat-tat-tat—which affects the ears like the distant noise of a terrible volley of musketry. A new warning from the electric bell. That means, "Get ready to go!" The rattling noise increases in a moment of supreme desperation all along the line, then grows weak, interrupting itself here and there, and at length dies away, and the battle is over. There is nothing to be done now but to pick up the dead. The carriers seize the letters, which they have just stamped, and pack them up in their bags, classifying them according to their route, putting together all those for the same street, and all those addressed to the same persons in that street. The bell sounds yet once more, for the last time, and one by one the postmen go away in small bands, just as they happen to finish their tasks. Some, who work in the very centre of the town, will begin their task of distribution at once, the others will get into the trams, or into vehicles built like the diligences of former days, which will take them to the district through which they have to make their rounds.

The diligence-like vehicles to which "Vidi" here refers will shortly become a thing of the past, for the minister has already issued an order for their abolition, after which they will be replaced by a special service of tram-cars.

As no addresses are written upon the newspapers which have been subscribed for at the post-office, it is incumbent on the postman to have recourse to a note-book placed at the central post for this purpose, and to remember at which house in such and



such a street he must leave the papers. As the sorters have all been letter-carriers at one time or another, the work of classification is much facilitated, thirty or even forty letters being sorted in a minute. As might be expected, the Christmas-box which each postman looks forward to receiving at the commencement of the New Year is most acceptable. The sums received in this way are said to amount sometimes to as much as from £12 to £20 per man, and instances are believed to have occurred in rich districts, such as the Quartier Léopold, in which the gleanings of the postmen have reached the comparatively large sum of £40 a-man, almost equivalent to that of his yearly wages.

The wages and salaries in the Belgian postal service, however, are not high. Even the superintendent at the central post receives, I believe, no more than £200 a-year, the usual pay of a postmaster of the first class. In London, or even in Paris, the salary of an official of the same position would be at least three or four times as great. But economy in the matter of public expenditure is certainly characteristic of Belgium, nor can it be said that the administration of posts, railways, and public offices generally, seems to suffer thereby. The telegraph service is excellently worked, and is somewhat cheaper than in England, the lowest charge for telegrams being 5d. for fifteen words. There are tele-

phone offices in all large towns of any importance, and in this respect Belgium was until lately far ahead of our island.

About the organisation of the Belgian railways there is little to be said. The service of trains is good and punctual. The third-class carriages, however, are much inferior to those on our own lines. To the system of *abonnement* tickets I shall have occasion to refer. The cost of an ordinary season ticket, permitting the holder to travel throughout the year on any Belgian State railway, is 630 francs (£25, 4s.), second class. The workman's tickets appear to be very useful to those for whom they are intended; thus for the sum of 1s. 6d. the workman may travel to his factory, fifteen miles by train and back, every day for a week. There are also tickets for school-boys at a reasonable reduction, and for school excursions, a reduction of as much as 50 per cent being made in the latter case, provided there are ten boys present. Bicycles are taken for the moderate tariff of 70 centimes, but no package must be attached to them, otherwise this is charged for separately as luggage. Dogs must go third class, tiny animals in cages being allowed to travel in the same compartment with the owner, provided that the other travellers have no objection.

In the matter of refreshment-rooms the Belgian railways are much behind our own, and are few and

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far between. The small buffets which exist at some of the important stations are unsatisfactory, and the food provided is in many cases inferior to that of the hotel or café which is always to be found outside.



HÔTEL DE VILLE, BRUSSELS.

## BRUSSELS, GHENT, WATERLOO

### BRUSSELS

**B**RUSSELS, the capital of Brabant, is one of those cities which never seem to pall upon the visitor. It is bright and healthy, full of interesting museums and works of art and historic associations with the past; and it has the merit also of being thoroughly up-to-date in all that civilisation and modern science can suggest and carry out for the improvement and adornment of a town. Much luxury and taste are displayed in its shops, especially in the *magasins-de-luxe* of the Montagne de la Cour. The shady and spacious boulevards, the pleasant little park within the town, and the beautiful Bois de la Cambre without, bestow upon the capital that relief afforded by freshness of foliage and abundance of open spaces which are wanting in so many of our own large cities. Although more than half a million people dwell within the limits of Brussels and its suburbs, one is apt to be struck, not by the size of the city, but by its apparent smallness. It is difficult, indeed, to realise that one-twelfth of the Bel-

gian nation are enumerated in the Brussels census. Possibly this is due to the excellent service of steam-trams, which, forming a zone round the city and penetrating its main arteries, tend to diminish in our minds the sense of proportion and space.

There must be another reason, however, for the same peculiarity was observable long before the steam-tram made itself heard in the land. The truth is, that Brussels is a comparatively small town within a large one. The smaller, with its population of 192,000, is that of the visitor as well as of the business and professional classes; the larger is represented by the suburbs, which are all of them within an easy reach by tramway of the centre of Brussels. These are in reality so many fair-sized towns, each with a system of administration of its own. Thus Schaerbeek contains 60,000 inhabitants and St Gilles 47,000; both of them, though adjoining the main boulevards, scarce coming within the ken of the ordinary visitor to Brussels.

An excellent idea of the compactness of the town itself can be obtained by following the course of the large boulevard from the Gare du Nord, past the pretty Jardin Botanique and Quetelet's famous observatory, to the Place Louise in the Boulevard Waterloo. Here, if the afternoon be fine, let us take up our position for a few moments, and watch the crowds of passers-by wending their way on foot in the direction of the Bois de la Cambre. Probably there is a concert at the Laiterie. Carriage

after carriage of well-dressed people drives past at rapid pace. Smart young officers in uniform, amongst whom those of the Guides are usually conspicuous, ride along the *allée* reserved for equestrians. Cycles, motor-cars, and petroleum abominations whirl by with dangerous velocity, outstripping the steam-trams, which are crowded to the utmost by passengers on pleasure bent. Only the expenditure of a trifling tram-fare and they have exchanged the turmoil and confinement of stock-exchange, bank, and shop for good music, fresh air, and rural scenery. A walk or drive up the Avenue Louise enables one to gauge in some degree the wealth of the inhabitants of the quarter, which vies with the Quartier Léopold in the neighbourhood of the Park as the favourite residence for fashion and wealth. At present what is called "Haussmannism," after the celebrated prefect of the Seine who rebuilt and beautified Paris in the time of the Empire, is on the increase in Brussels and its suburbs. Old buildings, picturesque it may be, unhealthy certainly, are being swept away by the relentless pickaxes of the builders' men, and everywhere well-built and handsome houses with broad thoroughfares or well-planted boulevards are occupying the ground in their stead. In all this, of course, there is something to regret. Sentiment is prone to disparage a change which obliterates that which has survived the lapse of centuries, and something of what Brussels has lost in this respect, if it has

gained in others, will be observed by any one who takes the trouble to enter the interesting Musée Communale in the Grande Place. There he may see sketches in water-colours of the buildings in the lower part of the town which formerly adorned the bank of the little river, the Senne, which now, arched over, flows sluggishly beneath the handsome Boulevards Senne, Anspach, and Hainault. These quaint old buildings were very beautiful in their decay, but that they were veritable death-traps, reeking of typhoid and diphtheria, who can doubt, in face of the immensely decreased death-rate which the improvements of the past thirty years have brought in their train? The upper part of Brussels is probably as healthy as any city in Europe. The subsoil is dry, the drainage excellent. It is sufficiently cold in winter to be bracing, while during the summer—and I speak from the recollection of some very hot summers spent in it—I have never suffered the stifling sensation which one frequently experiences in London during July and August. And even on the warmest days there is so much shade, and the outdoor concerts in the Park or Bois in the afternoon, or at the Vauxhall in the evening, are so delightful that one is readily disposed to accept the inevitable and to cease from grumbling at the heat.

Brussels, of course, is one of the chosen homes of music and song. The Théâtre de la Monnaie has long been celebrated for its admirable opera. During

the winter season one may hear as good a performance at the Monnaie for a 5-franc piece as one would pay 20s. or 30s. for at Covent Garden in the summer following. The choruses, it is true, are unsatisfactory in appearance, plainness of feature being apparently no bar to an engagement at the opera; but the orchestra is perfect, the equal of any in Europe, and the leading performers are certain to be singers of the first or of almost the first rank. The Conservatoire, a handsome building near the Park, is the recognised training-place for singers and violinists. It is open to Belgians free of cost, but foreigners must pay about £8 a-year for the privilege of attending its courses of lessons. A first prize for violinists from the Brussels Conservatoire is regarded as no small distinction by musical people throughout Europe. Many English ladies attend the classes for stringed instruments, which are free from any objection, but with the singing classes the case is different. These are attended mainly by chorus girls, and English ladies are recommended not to join the classes but, if possible, to obtain private lessons from one or other of the ladies who teach at the Conservatoire.

The art collections for which Brussels is renowned are extremely interesting, even to those who have little acquaintance with the subject. I suppose that most English people have visited the Musée Wiertz, near the Park Leopold, and have viewed with a certain sense of admiration, not unmixed with amusement, the vagaries of that singular genius. I am perfectly



aware that it is the fashion with critics to decry the merits of the artist, who was as unconventional in his delineation of his subjects as he was independent in the manner of his life. But it is impossible to withhold a certain meed of praise from a man so absolutely devoted to the exercise of his calling. "Eccentric," "fantastic," "grotesque"—term him what you will—there is yet a certain power and vigour of execution in most of the strange freaks of his fancy which appeal more forcibly to the mind—at all events, to the mind of the layman—than the efforts of many another painter of world-wide fame and repute. Witness, for example, his immense canvas, the picture of the Greeks and Trojans contending for the body of Patroclus. Who can deny that the artist has produced a scene that breathes the very spirit of the Homeric age? Or that figure of Napoleon in hell, perishing in the lurid and never-dying flame, surrounded by the infuriated victims of his policy of war and bloodshed—it is not possible to cast one's eye over that and deny the power of the hand which depicted so impressive a scene. Wiertz was born at Dinant at the beginning of the century. Rubens was the ideal of his precocious boyhood, which appears to have been given up entirely to the pursuit of that art which was to be the dream of his whole life. For six years he studied at Antwerp, scarcely spending anything except upon necessary food, and working as long as daylight lasted, in the miserable garret which constituted both his lodging and his studio. At the

age of twenty-six he went to Rome and devoted himself to the production of his greatest work, the *Patroclus*, to which I have already alluded. The celebrated sculptor Thorwaldsen was among the first to praise the successful effort of the artist. "This young man is a giant," was his encomium, uttered on viewing the canvas. The merits of the work were duly recognised in Belgium, but owing to a bad position and poor light, attracted but little attention when exhibited in the following year at the Paris Salon. Much disappointed, the painter returned to Liège, and settling down with his aged mother in the town, commenced another large picture, the *Revolt of Hell*, on the wall of an old disused church, which thus became his studio. The subsequent success of his *Triumph of Christ*, painted in an abandoned factory at Brussels, induced the Government to erect for Wiertz the museum which we now admire. This museum was built from the designs of the artist himself, in imitation of one of the ruined temples at Pæstum, and stands in the midst of very beautiful grounds. The sole condition insisted upon by the Government was that the painter should bequeath his works to the nation, in order that they might be on exhibition for ever in the house erected for their reception. With such a will did the painter set himself to work that by the time of his death at the age of fifty-nine he had succeeded in completely covering the walls with the efforts of his industry. It must be said that these are of very unequal merit, and the

peep-shows and panoramic contrivances for giving effect to the scenes are quite below the dignity of a great artist. Buried Alive and Hunger, Madness, and Crime are two instances of this application of subsidiary aid to subjects which are gruesome and horrible in the extreme. But though the fantastic and the weird predominate in the work of Wiertz, it must not be thought that there are no touches by a gentler pencil. There are many such, nor is humour wanting, and that too of a refined and not unkindly nature. I am reminded here of an amusing anecdote related to me by a member of a Belgian family, for whom Wiertz had painted one of the portraits by which he eked out a scanty existence, whilst engaged upon those larger works, for which he refused to accept any remuneration whatever. A certain rich and rather niggardly man having had his portrait painted by the artist, refused to pay for the production on the plea that the likeness was bad. "Very good," said Wiertz, "we will soon determine whether the picture resembles you or not." Accordingly he took back the portrait, and having painted some bars across the face, exposed it for sale in a shop window in a leading thoroughfare with the words "Imprisoned for debt" inscribed legibly below. The sequel is easily imagined. The stingy man was only too glad to buy the picture, the original of which the passers-by had little difficulty in recognising, at the greatly increased price which the artist chose to impose upon the work.

Close to the Musée Wiertz is the pretty Park Leopold, formerly containing the Zoological Gardens, an attraction which Brussels unfortunately no longer possesses. In this respect the capital is surpassed by Antwerp, whose Zoological Gardens, adjoining the railway-station, are well worth the trouble of a visit. The Natural History Museum, however, has been lately removed to the Park Leopold, and though unable to compete with our own magnificent collections in Cromwell Road, it is well arranged and contains many specimens of interest, especially the fossil remains of the Iguanodon, discovered at Bernissart in 1878, a mammoth unearthed at Lierre in 1860, and a rich collection of bones found in the grottoes of the Lesse.

The Parc and Musée at the Palace of Cinquante-naire, in the same district, are also remarkable, if only for the wonderful panorama of Cairo, the masterpiece of the painter Émile Wauters. Another museum which deserves to be seen is the Musée du Congo, in the beautiful Park of Tervueren, once the residence of the unfortunate Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico and brother-in-law of the present King of the Belgians. I know of no pleasanter excursion in the neighbourhood of Brussels than a visit to this charming spot, which is easily reached by an electric tramway, running, in the latter part of its course, through shady and agreeable woods. Another, though a much shorter excursion, is to Laeken with its royal chateau. Nothing can be more lovely than the

wealth of blossom displayed by the flowers in the immense hothouses of the king. Passing the cemetery on my way to Laeken, I usually take a glance at the marble statue hard by the tomb where repose the remains of the famous singer Malibran. The four lines of Lamartine inscribed on the pedestal are a worthy epitaph to this remarkable woman :—

“ Beauté, génie, amour furent ses noms de femme,  
Inscrits dans son regard, dans son cœur, dans sa voix,  
Sous trois formes à Dieu appartenait cette âme,  
Pleurez, terre, et vous cieux, accueillez-la trois fois.”

The statue is by Geefs, to whose genius is due also the monument of Leopold I. in the Park.

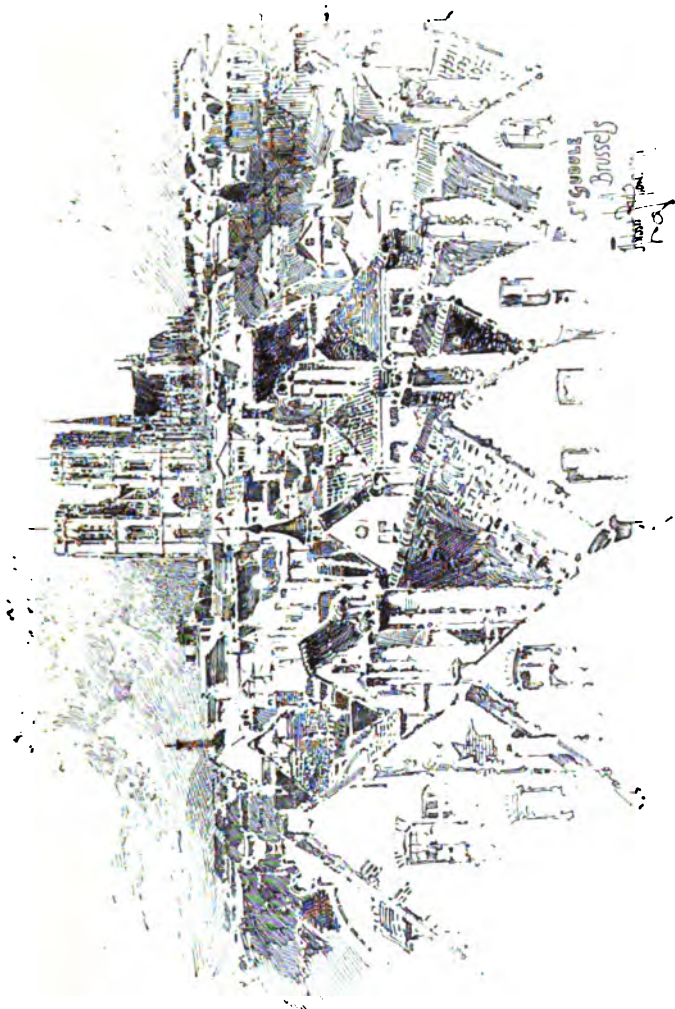
But without doubt the spot best worth seeing in all Brussels is the Grande Place. It has been so often and so fully described that I shall do no more than indicate its salient features. The finest square in Europe, it has witnessed perhaps more of the stirring events in the history of the Netherlands than any other spot in Belgium. It was there that the edicts of the princes were proclaimed, that oaths of fidelity were taken, and tournaments and public rejoicings held. It was there, too, that Counts Egmont and Hoorn perished on the scaffold and that François Anneessens laid down his life in the sacred cause of freedom, at the hands of the Austrian aggressors. The Hôtel de Ville with its admirable tapering tower almost surpasses that of Louvain in beauty. The handsome Maison du Roi, which has been recently

rebuilt and gilded, and the interesting guild-houses, which have undergone a like restoration, are all worthy of a careful study. Very attractive, too, is the scene in the morning, when the square is filled with the stalls of the market people and the air is redolent with the fragrance of the flowers. The Communal Museum, inside the Maison du Roi, contains many a relic and reminiscence of historic and medieval Brussels. The same may be said of that of the Porte de Hal, not far from the Gare du Midi. This building dates from as far back as the year 1381, and was originally built on piles, in the middle of a large moat filled with water. For a time during the French Revolution it was used as a prison, and since 1848, when it was restored by the order of the Government, it has been employed as a museum for ancient armour and other relics of the past. Among these, the horse upon which the Archduke Albert made his entry into Brussels in 1599 is worthy of notice, not merely on account of the historic interest attaching to the animal, but also because it is in all probability the most ancient specimen of a stuffed horse in existence.

Of the churches of Brussels, the Cathedral, dedicated to St Gudule, is the most important. It was commenced as far back as 1220, on the site of another building erected in 1047, to contain the remains of the holy Gudule. In allusion to an ancient legend, the saintly maiden is usually represented carrying a lantern, which the archfiend endeavours to extinguish.

The chapel of the Holy Sacrament, on the left of the choir, contains some beautiful stained glass, which recalls the miracle which befell the Sacred Hosts said to have been stolen by the Jews on Good Friday 1370. Many Jews were put to death for the supposed offence and the rest banished from Brussels for ever. Of course there are plenty there now, but scarcely so many as we should expect, considering the comparative proximity of Germany and England. The wooden seventeenth-century pulpit, carved originally by Verbruggen for the Jesuits' church at Louvain, represents Adam and Eve being driven from Paradise. The tree of life is crowded with birds and animals of singular variety and shape. Similar curious specimens of wood-carving may be observed in other towns of Belgium — at Liège and Louvain, for example.

Next to the Grande Place, the Picture Gallery is perhaps the most important thing to be noticed in Brussels. The collection of the old masters in the Palais des Beaux-Arts has been recently rearranged, and contains many excellent examples of the work of the artists who have made the Netherlands famous. True, Memling is better represented at Bruges, and Quintin Matys and Rubens are more closely associated with Antwerp; but this notwithstanding, many of their works find a place with the masterpieces of Van Eyck, Van Dyck, Roger van der Weyden, Teniers, Gerard Dou, Rembrandt, and others in the gallery at Brussels.



ST GUDULE, BRUSSELS.



The Royal Library with 300,000 volumes and the Museum of Modern Painters are in close proximity to the Museum of Old Masters. The MSS. room of the former building contains the celebrated Burgundian collection, formed by Philippe le Bon in the fifteenth century, and many beautifully illustrated missals. But the attractions and sights of modern Brussels are endless. Even the chief external features—the immense Palais de Justice with its lofty dome, the Bourse, the Royal Palace, the House of Representatives, and some of the other buildings, to which I have already alluded—are as nothing in comparison with the interest attaching to its busy thoroughfares and crowded marts. Life and animation are the prevailing characteristics of a town in which, if there is plenty of hard work, there is certainly no want of amusement as well. There are plenty of good theatres and plenty of well-built, well-served cafés, in which the Belgian may take his coffee and cigar, and read his newspaper in the intervals of business; but most of all will he prefer as evening approaches to sit outside and watch the crowd as it paces along the Boulevard Anspach, or other artery, throbbing with human life, and glowing with the reflected lustre of many hundreds of lamps.

## GHENT

An hour and a half by rail from Brussels, on the line to Ostend, is Ghent, one of the most Flemish of the cities of Flanders. Ostend may be cosmopolitan, at all events in the season; Antwerp may have more than a touch of German in its commercial atmosphere; Bruges may have not yet lost all trace of Spanish blood and association; but Ghent, the city of Van Artevelde, the birthplace of "time-honoured Lancaster," and of the great Emperor Charles V., remains, as ever, Flemish to the core.

It is a pleasant town to ramble through, with its threefold interests of history, architecture, and commerce, and in addition to this, it possesses the advantage of being a town where life and animation abound, and is therefore a contrast to its neighbour, "Bruges the dead." It has changed, certainly, since Charles V. made the preposterous pun that he could put all Paris in his glove (*gant*). In his day the town was the largest in Europe; now it contains a population of about 160,000. Most of us have read how its sturdy weavers drove back the large army of Edward I. in 1297, and later on, in 1302, helped to win the Battle of the Spurs against the French. For they were turbulent citizens these Gantois, and when necessary could muster 80,000 fighting men.

Few names are greater in Flemish history than that of Jacques van Artevelde (1290-1345), who, although

a noble by birth, joined the Guild of Brewers and afterwards became the "Dean" of the fifty-three trade-guilds. He it was who undertook the leadership of the popular party in the struggle against their feudal lord, Louis de Crécy, and attempted to form a federation of the provinces of the Netherlands. In the war between Philip VI., King of France, and Edward III. of England, he took the part of the latter and assumed the title of "Guardian of the Public Peace" (of Flanders). For some years Artevelde was supreme at Ghent, and his friendship with Edward led to important results in the commercial policy of both countries, England being the producer of the wool and Ghent the manufacturer of woollen goods. At length he transgressed the bounds of moderation, and venturing to suggest that the Black Prince should be elected Count of Flanders, brought upon himself a fate perhaps not entirely undeserved. He was assassinated in his own house in July 1345, by the leader of his Flemish enemies, Gerard Denys. The quarrel between the Counts of Ghent and the Gantois still went on; but the town continued to prosper. Philip van Artevelde, the son of Jacques, next appears on the scene as leader of the Gantois in their struggle with Count Louis and the men of Bruges. He was at first victorious, defeating Louis near Bruges, which he took and gave over to pillage. War broke out again at the end of the same year, however, and Louis, reinforced by the troops of Charles VI.

of France, marched against the Gantois. In the great battle of Roosebeke, which followed, 20,000 Flemings are said to have been slain, among them Philip van Artevelde. The city was compelled to submit to the Count, and after his death came into the possession of Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy.

During the struggles of the fourteenth century Ghent ran the risk of losing its cloth industry, for some 20,000 of its workmen left the place to seek a quieter home at Louvain. Notwithstanding this, its commercial prosperity continued, and about this period the Hôtel de Ville and some of the other buildings which still excite our admiration were founded. In the fifteenth century the Gantois were in arms against their new masters, the Dukes of Burgundy, and objecting to the taxes imposed by Philip the Good, attempted to throw off their allegiance. The struggle went on for five years, but ended ultimately in the disastrous defeat at Gavère (1453), in which the citizens lost 16,000 men. Philip now crushed the Gantois with an iron hand, forcing the chief citizens to march out by the gate with halters round their necks, and to kiss the dust at his feet. In addition he levied heavy contributions on the town and took away some of its most valuable privileges. His son Charles the Bold succeeded him in 1467. After constant struggles with the Flemings and the Liégeois, he perished in the battle of Nancy. His daughter Marie, who afterwards married Maximilian of Austria, granted charters and privileges to the

town. On her death from a fall from her horse, her husband became regent, but not without opposition from the Flemings.

It was in this century that Ghent became celebrated for its affection for art. The brothers Van Eyck made it their residence from 1419 to 1422, during which period they executed their famous picture, the Adoration of the Lamb. Among other painters who have made Ghent their home may be mentioned Hugo van der Goes, Gerard van der Meire, Lucas de Heere, and Gaspar de Crayer. The marriage of Maximilian and Marie had brought the Netherlands under the domination of Austria. The celebrated Charles V., who was known at different periods of his life by the titles of Count of Flanders, King of Spain, Archduke of Austria, and Emperor of Germany, was born in 1500 in the Palace of the Counts. He too had trouble with the Gantois, who, revolting in 1539, refused to pay the required subsidies, in consequence of which some of the privileges of the town were forfeited. Charles abdicated in 1555 in favour of his son, Philip II. The latter introduced the Inquisition into Flanders, and thus began the long wars which ravaged the Netherlands. In 1576 was made the famous "Pacification of Ghent," which united the Netherlands, under William the Silent, against the King of Spain. From this period the history of the town ceases to have any distinct prominence and is merged in that of the rest of the Low Countries.

During the Hundred Days which preceded the battle

of Waterloo, Ghent was the residence of the exiled Louis XVIII., who occupied a house in the Rue des Champs. Here he was visited in April 1815 by the Duke of Wellington, who had been appointed commander of the Allied forces. As most of the sovereigns of Europe had sent their ambassadors to the town, the capital of Flanders once more presented the appearance of a royal residence. The battle of Waterloo brought about a new era of prosperity for Ghent, which once more became the most important of Flemish cities. This is due not only to its increased commerce, but also to its being the seat of an important university, and of one of the three Courts of Appeal in the kingdom.

In the days when Ghent was the chief manufacturing city in Europe, Bruges was the sole port by which the English wool employed in the cloth factories was permitted to enter the city. Consequently the canals, which intersect the town in all directions and divide it into some twenty or thirty islands, had a very real use at that period. Of recent years the facilities afforded by the railway have somewhat altered matters, though since the ship canal from Terneuzen has been deepened sufficiently to admit vessels of a fair size, the traffic by water is once more upon the increase. In 1899, 952 vessels, including 568 British, entered the port. Regular lines of steamers connect the town with England, Scotland, and Ireland, as well as with Antwerp, Brussels, Louvain, Malines, and other Belgian cities.

The commerce of Ghent received a severe blow in 1847 from the introduction of machinery in the cotton industry, and again in consequence of the cotton famine, which followed upon the Civil War in America. The co-operative and mutual-help societies, which are mainly in the hands of the Socialists, are much in evidence. In the month of April 1899 the Vooruit Co-operative Society manufactured more than 100,000 loaves a-week. The town is full of quaint odds and ends of medieval architecture, rambling streets, dank canals, and pleasant boulevards. The cathedral is certain to attract attention, not so much from its outward appearance, which is harsh and heavy, as on account of the admirable works of art which are housed within its walls. Of these, the famous altar-piece, the Adoration of the Lamb, the great work of the Flemish artists Hubert and Jan Van Eyck, is undoubtedly the chief. The subject is that of the Apocalypse, and it may be remarked that the work is not quite the same as that painted by the two brothers, as portions of the original are now in the museums of Berlin and Brussels. There is also a fine picture by Rubens, of the reception of St Bavon into the Abbey of St Amand, and other works by Pourbus, De Crayer, and Seghers. Near the Cathedral is the Belfry, 375 feet high, with its famous bell Roland, bearing the inscription, "My name is Roland; when I toll there is fire, when I ring there is victory in Flanders." The picturesque



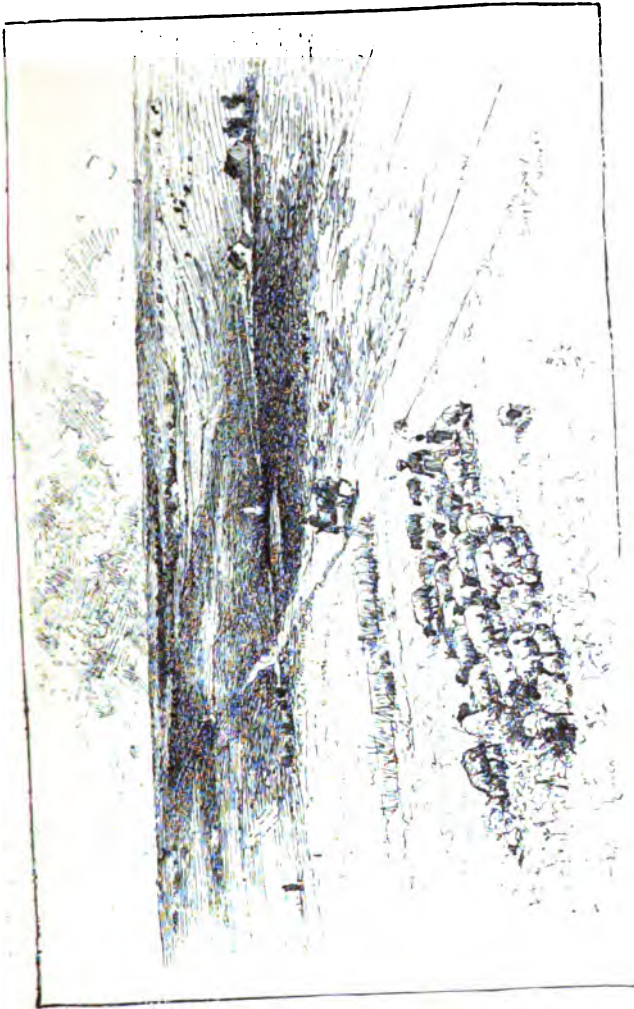
ST BAVON AND THE BELFRY, GHENT.



Oudeburg, or residence of the Counts of Flanders, where John of Gaunt was born in 1340, the Rabot gateway, the Hôtel de Ville, and the Grand Béguinage are among the many objects of interest which should be seen by all who spend a day or two in the capital of Flanders. But a much longer time might be employed profitably in modern Ghent, where a theatre, plenty of concerts, two or three clubs, agreeable public gardens, and good shops do much to make the time pass pleasantly.

### WATERLOO

All English visitors to Brussels, and not a few Americans, deem it their duty to pay a visit to the historic field of Waterloo. In all probability, save to the tourist who is a military critic, that visit is considered sufficient. For hallowed as the soil is by the recollection of England's greatest victory, the place itself is anything but picturesque, and when one has made the tedious ascent of the Lion Mound, viewed the contents of the Cotton Museum, and perambulated the vicinity of the farms of Hougomont and Belle Alliance, one feels that he has done his duty as a patriot, and is not unwilling to turn once more in the direction of Brussels. Personally, I have seen the field under a variety of circumstances. Once, when the ground was covered with hardened snow, I made my way



THE FIELD OF WATERLOO.

thither from Brussels on foot in the company of a congenial friend, and again in early spring while the country was still destitute of foliage, and yet once more last summer when the reapers were gathering in the harvest, a good one, but probably not so good as those which followed the year of the great battle of 1815. In each case the impression left upon my mind was the same, that were it not for the enthralling historic interest which attaches itself to the unattractive, bare, undulating fields, beneath which the bones of so many heroes have crumbled into dust, one would care little about taking a journey through this part of Belgium. Of course there is the Forest of Soignies, which one passes on going to Waterloo by coach; but the Forest of Soignies and the field of Waterloo are two very different places. Indeed I am not sure that the best time of the year to visit Waterloo is not in winter, when the coach does not run, and one must be content to go by rail or to walk. For in winter the swarms of beggars—the great pest of Waterloo—are absent; for nowhere—not even in Ireland—is mendicity so rampant as in the villages which adjoin the battlefield. In winter they have disappeared, like flies killed off by frost, only to re-emerge from their obscurity when the fine days of spring tempt the tourists over from Brussels to view the field, and further pauperise the wretched inhabitants by purchasing old bullets and other rubbish, manufactured for no other purpose than that of swindling the un-

suspicious stranger. All of us remember Byron's spirited lines on the battle:—

“ Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,  
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay ;  
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,  
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day  
Battle's magnificently stern array !  
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent  
The earth is covered thick with other clay,  
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent  
Rider and horse, friend, foe—in one red burial blent !”

It is not a little singular that Lady Louisa Tighe, one of those who was present on the occasion of the dance to which the poet refers, should have passed away only as recently as March 3, 1900. She and her sister, the late Dowager Lady de Ros, were daughters of the Duke of Richmond, at whose house the ball was held. Much controversy had arisen with regard to the locality in which the house was situated. Sir William Fraser, in his work on Wellington, asserted that the Duke's residence was in the Rue des Cendres, but Lady de Ros and her sister refuted this mistake by proving conclusively that the building was situated in the Rue de Blanchisserie, upon a site where the Convent Hospital now stands. It may be added that Lady Louisa, then in her twelfth year, actually buckled on the Duke's sword round his waist, before he mounted his horse Copenhagen to ride off to Quatre Bras. There is no need to repeat the story of the battle of the 18th of June. As we remember, the numbers

on either side were nearly equal, but of the 67,000 men at Wellington's disposal, about 24,000 only were British, the rest being Germans, Dutch, and Belgians. The loyalty of the Belgians was more than questionable, and it was probably for this reason, rather than from any want of courage, that the Belgian soldiers at an early stage of the conflict ceased to take part in the battle. The result of the hard-fought fray and the present condition of the field are admirably described by Mr Fitchett in his 'Deeds which won the Empire':—

Waterloo was for the French not so much a defeat as a rout. Napoleon's army simply ceased to exist. The number of its slain is unknown, for its records were destroyed. The killed and wounded in the British army reached the tragical number of nearly 15,000. Probably not less than between 30,000 and 40,000 slain or wounded human beings were scattered, the night following the battle, over the two or three square miles where the great fight had raged, and some of the wounded men were lying there, still uncared for, four days afterwards. The deep cross-country road which covered Wellington's front has practically disappeared; the Belgians have cut away the banks to build a large pyramid, on the summit of which is perched a Belgian lion, with tail erect, grinning defiance towards the French frontier. A lion is not exactly the animal that best represents the contribution which the Belgian troops made to Waterloo. Still, the field keeps its main outlines. To the left lies Planchenoit, where Wellington watched to see the white smoke of the Prussian guns. Opposite is the gentle slope down which D'Erlon's troops marched to fling themselves on La Haye Sainte; and under the spectator's feet,

a little to his left, as he stands on the summit of the monument, is the ground over which Life Guards and Inniskillens and Scots Greys galloped in the fury of their great charge. Right in front is the path along which came Milhaud's Cuirassiers and Kellermann's lancers and Friant's Old Guard, in turn to fling themselves in vain on the obstinate squares and thin red line of the British. To the right is Hougomont, the orchard walls still pierced with loopholes made by the Guards. Victors and vanquished alike have passed away, and since the Old Guard broke on the slopes of Mont St Jean, British and French have never met in the wrestle of battle.



THE AVENUE LOUISE, BRUSSELS.

## ANTWERP AND THE PORTS

### ANTWERP

OWING to the ease with which it can be reached from Harwich, Antwerp is the best known of the Belgian ports. It is by far the largest also, and with its population of more than 300,000 is, next to the capital, the most important of Belgian towns.

The first glimpse of the city, as we steam up the Escaut or Schelde (by whichever name we prefer to call the river), is one that never palls upon the spectator. Its Gothic tapering spire, once compared by Charles V. to Mechlin lace, rising above the town; its acres and acres of docks, crowded with vessels sailing under every flag and carrying the produce of every clime, attract his attention long before the steamer has been brought to beside the quay. Too often when visiting this interesting city our minds are crowded with the recollection of the distant past,—of Charles V., or ferocious Alva, or of that famous siege which the pages of Schiller have rendered for ever memorable. Or perhaps our attention is devoted

to the rich store of art enshrined in its cathedral and museums, the magic canvases of Rubens, Teniers, and Van Dyck, and the whole throng of Belgian painters, whose masterpieces, coming down to us through the



MUSÉE PLANTIN, ANTWERP.

ages, will continue to enthrall succeeding generations. And that Musée Plantin, the abode of the toiling strenuous printer and his son-in-law (an artist, too, in his own line, if ever there was one), how can we



tear ourselves away from it and the contemplation of its splendid treasures! In any case, we are in danger of forgetting that Antwerp in the present is a port whose existence is the crowning glory of Belgian commerce, and (shall we confess it?) a standing menace to our own.

Unlike that of London, Liverpool, or Bristol, the maritime glory of Antwerp is of comparatively recent creation. Less than one hundred years ago—in 1803—not a single ship belonging to the town sailed the ocean. True, in the sixteenth century, under the beneficent sway of the Emperor Charles, her prosperity as a port was probably unrivalled in Europe; but the decadence of ancient Antwerp, which began with the Spanish wars, and terminated with the treaty of Münster, which forbade seagoing vessels to ascend the river to the city, together with the commercial rise of England and Holland, changed all this, and the beginning of the nineteenth century found Antwerp a harbour without ships.

The rise in her fortunes was as sudden as it was unexpected. In 1806, 627 vessels of all kinds plied between Antwerp and other Belgian towns. Napoleon was the magician at whose beck this fleet sprang into being, and it was England's commerce that the development was intended to replace. The genius which had known how to place the cannon on the heights of Toulon with the object of causing the English to evacuate the city was now devoted to dealing a crushing blow to the trade of his rival.

Arriving at Antwerp on July the 18th, 1803, Napoleon lost little time in setting to work to attain his purpose. On the 23rd of July he ordered the construction of an arsenal and docks; on the 26th of the same month he gave orders for the building of the fleet with which he intended to attack his enemy. The central dock was opened in August 1804. The corvettes *Phaëton*, *Voltigeur*, and *Favori*, and the frigate *Caroline*, were launched in 1805. At the beginning of January 1807 there were in the docks ten vessels in the course of construction. The number of vessels of war launched on the Schelde in 1813 amounted to thirteen or fourteen ships of the line, of which one was a three-decker with 120 guns, two having 80, and the rest 74 guns each. By 1814, at the end of the French occupation of Antwerp, the materials collected in the docks had reached 300 millions of francs. Let us quote a few figures to show the extraordinary increase of maritime traffic under the French rule.

In 1795, the year of the reopening of the Schelde, after the victories of Pichegru and the foundation of the Batavian Republic, only two vessels ascended the river. In 1805 the number had risen to 2424. In 1806, the year of the establishment of the Continental blockade, the number was 1678. In 1809 it had dwindled to 257, to rise again in 1812 to 1446. In 1899 the number of vessels entering the harbour amounted to 5198, with an average tonnage of 1234 tons.

During the Continental blockade, which appears to have been favourable to Belgian commerce, several foreign merchants founded business houses at Antwerp. In 1807 was issued the famous Berlin Decree, ordering the destruction by fire of the merchandise seized on board vessels that had touched at English ports, which was put into force in a case in 1810, when the cargo of an offending vessel was publicly burnt in the Place Verte. This decree gave rise to much evasion and subterfuge. Licences were granted to vessels, which, touching at English ports, were permitted to import into Belgium as much goods as they had exported. The result was that the vessels sailed from Antwerp with a cargo consisting of packages of goods loaded above others which contained objects of a worthless nature. The latter of course were thrown away as soon as the vessel reached the open sea. Among other plans which Napoleon had for Antwerp was one, never carried out, to build a new town on the left bank of the Schelde, with barracks and an arsenal, to be protected when necessary by flooding, and supported by forts. As M. Deiss remarks, justice has not been done by most Belgian writers to the influence of France and Napoleon on the actual prosperity of Antwerp. It is true that during the French occupation disturbances occurred in various towns; none the less were the reopening of the Schelde by the French authorities, and the decrees of Napoleon relative to the formation of a maritime town, the

original causes of the present great position of the city.

Steam navigation on the Schelde dates from the period of the Dutch supremacy. In 1817, the steamer Prince of Orange made the journey between Rotterdam and Antwerp, and by 1828 a line of steamers united London and Antwerp. To Antwerp the separation of Belgium and Holland was a heavy blow, for the volume of Dutch commerce and the importance of her colonies, in conjunction with the great industries and cornfields of Belgium, would have tended to increase the greatness of the Flemish city. By the separation of the two countries, indeed, she lost her trade with India. Fortunately she found in Cuba and Brazil other outlets for her expanding commerce. It was not until 1847, however, that Holland, when the creation of railways rendered a less restricted intercourse between the two countries desirable, removed the imposts on the ships that passed through the mouth of the Schelde.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The number of ships entering Belgian ports has increased greatly since the independence of the country was declared in 1832.

The figures for the four ports for that year, and some of the following, are—

Years.	Antwerp.	Ostend.	Ghent.	Nieuport.	Total.
1832	1267	934	..	95	2296
1850	1406	489	174	96	2165
1860	2547	831	354	48	3780
1870	3967	1266	395	30	5658
1880	4475	1486	657	49	6667
1890	4728	1618	976	73	7395
1897	5246	2061	1027	54	8388

In 1860 Rotterdam and Antwerp were almost equally prosperous, but the Belgian port is at present the better off of the two rivals, though Hamburg has become, since 1898, the chief port in continental Europe.

At the risk of taxing the patience of the reader, I must cite a few further facts and figures indicative of the rapid extension of the port of Antwerp from this time forward. In 1853 the municipal council decided on forming outside the fortifications the Bassin du Kattendyk, with an area of 230 acres and connected with the river by a sluice. This was opened in 1860; and four years later was finished the Bassin aux Bois, to the east of the Kattendyk.

In 1863 the right of levying dues on the vessels in the port, granted to Holland by the treaty of 1839, was commuted for a sum of 36 million francs. Of this Belgium paid one-third, the rest being contributed by the other nations concerned. Of these, Great Britain was responsible for the largest sum—more than 8 millions of francs; France and Prussia came next with less than 2 millions. This arrangement, to which so much of the subsequent prosperity of the town is due, was the work of the Belgian Minister, Charles Rogier, and his secretary, the Count of Lambermont.

With increased trade arose the need for more docks. The Bassin du Kattendyk was joined to the docks formed by the first Napoleon; the Bassin aux Bois was extended, and the new docks of Campine and Asia opened to commerce in 1873. Later on, the Bassin du Kattendyk was prolonged to the north, and the Bassin de Batelage-Nord opened to navigation; while about the same time the quays were improved by the erection of the steam and hydraulic

cranes, turning-bridges, and sluices which we remark at the present time. Notwithstanding the extension of the harbour, however, the number and tonnage of the vessels entering the port increased out of due proportion. In 1870, 3967 vessels sailed up the Schelde. In 1880, the total had swelled to 4475. Further extension therefore was deemed necessary, and M. Royers, the engineer of the port, was requested to put his plans into execution. As a result the largest *bassin*, that of Lefebvre, 320 acres in area, and the Bassin America, with its huge petroleum-tanks, were called into being.

Meanwhile the extension of the wharfs had not been neglected. In 1877 a French firm, that of Couvreur & Hersent, had been intrusted with the construction of new quays. These were of great extent, comprising, among other things, a wharf from the sluice of the Kattendyk to the site of the Southern Citadel, more than two miles in length and 25 feet in depth. But these improvements were not sufficient for long for the needs of a rapidly increasing commerce. In May 1895 a new agreement was signed by the Belgian Government and the town of Antwerp for the construction of more than another mile of quays to the south of those established in 1884. These, uncompleted as yet, are destined to meet the requirements of companies having a regular service.

In the space of twenty-six years the tonnage of the port has increased fourfold. Even now, more than

thirty lines of steamers ask for a fixed spot for the mooring and unloading of their vessels.

The quays of the Schelde when finished will extend for a distance of considerably over three miles; but they cannot be continued in a farther direction up the river without inconveniently displacing the centre of commercial operations and bringing it to too great a distance from the town. Various plans have been projected to meet the difficulty by extending the town to the north and along the left bank of the river, to the locality known as the Tête de Flandre. Of these, that of the Government, entitled the "Grande Coupure," seemed at one time the most likely to be adopted, but I hear on good authority that one of the various alternative measures is likely to be carried into effect.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the desired extension of the docks, the unsatisfactory condition of a portion of the river between the Kruisschans and the Boerinne Sluis—where considerable dredging operations have become necessary—has rendered some such alteration almost imperative, and the Grande Coupure, initiated by the American engineer Mr Lindon Bates, would seem in some degree likely to meet the difficulty. Mr Bates's plan, it is said, would completely suppress the more dangerous part of the river, the bend by Fort

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written in 1900, a partial solution of the difficulty has been arrived at by the construction of an additional mile of river quay adjoining the Quai de la Station. Alterations have also been made in the Bassin de la Campine and in the Grand Bassin to admit of berthing more vessels in these docks.

Philippe, and form a new bed for the Schelde between the Kruisschans and the sluice of the Kattendyk. The right bank of the cutting would give a new line of quays, five miles long, with a depth of about twenty-four feet of water, in front of the walls, even at low tide.

On the other hand, it is urged by M. Royers, whose own plan has received the approval of the town of Antwerp, that "it has not been proved that the project of the Grande Coupure, adopted by the Government, will give the result stated, and permit navigation on the Schelde, even for ships of the largest draught, at all states of the tide. It is certain that its execution will occasion serious confusion and an interruption of navigation, and that it will give rise to other dangers."

These other dangers he explains to be the formation of fresh sandbanks in the river, following on the division of the current into two arms by the new works, and the consequent hindrance to navigation, entailing serious injury to the future of the port.

M. Royers's own plan comprises a canal or dock provided with sluices, uniting the present docks and the bend of the Kattendyk to the curve of the Kruisschans. This scheme would give nearly four miles of new quays, and would provide, in addition, for the construction of a naval arsenal, depots for stores, and other buildings of general utility.

A singular organisation existing in connection with the port is that of the companies, or societies, called



the "Nations Anversoises," whose members are employed in loading and unloading and in weighing and carting the goods committed to their charge. These associations have existed since the epoch of the first prosperity of the town, and although suppressed for a time during the period of French supremacy, were once more established in 1820. Their numbers at the present time amount to fifty, each containing from twenty to sixty members. At the head of each "nation" are the dean, whose business it is to fix the work of the members, to direct the company, and to preside over the meetings of its council, and the sub-dean, who occupies himself with the business concerns of the company and goes to the exchange in order to obtain orders from the merchants. Other officials busy themselves with the supervision of the stables or of the merchandise on the quays and in the warehouses.

In addition to these, a committee of five members, annually elected by their colleagues, controls the monthly expenditure, and manages the daily operations of the company. The foreman of the "nation" goes to the office every morning, at 6.30 in summer and 7 in winter, to receive his work for the day. Thereafter he makes his way with his workmen and carts to the docks and quays, returning in the evening to give an account of what he has done. The profits are distributed amongst the members every month. When the operations have been successful, a certain sum is deducted and placed in the reserve fund.

This may be drawn upon at other times when business has been bad. A sick member receives the same sum as the rest; but after six months have elapsed he receives no more, and may even be compelled to sell his share.

The capital of these societies is represented by the horses and carts and different buildings employed in the business. Comparatively large sums are invested, and in some societies the share of each member may represent as much as £1400; in fact this is the value of a share in the Noordnatie, the most important of the Antwerp "nations." The Noordnatie is composed of sixty-one members, and employs 800 workmen, occupied with the loading and unloading of the vessels, and weighing and sorting of the goods which are stored in its warehouses.

Since 1843 Antwerp has been the only port in Belgium for the embarkation of emigrants, but in this respect her situation has become weakened to the advantage of Liverpool, Havre, Hamburg, and Bremen. It is to the regular lines of navigation that the present great importance of the town is due. The pioneers of the present liners would appear to be certain sailing-vessels which commenced their voyages for Valparaiso and Rio de Janeiro in 1841. To quote the names of all the regular lines of navigation possessing fixed stations at Antwerp, along the quays or within the docks, would be tedious; but the list would be found to include such companies as the Peninsular and Oriental, the Red

Star Line, the North German Lloyd, the Compagnie belge maritime du Congo, the Messageries maritimes de France, the Union Steamship Company, and about fifty other well-known names.

A network of canals connects Antwerp with the rest of Belgium. Thus the Schelde communicates with the Rhine and the Meuse by means of the canal of Zuid Beveland and that of Walcheren, and with the Liège portion of the Meuse by the canal of the Campine. Other canals help to connect Antwerp with Charleroi, Brussels, and the north of France. In short, there would appear to be no limit to the number of these useful waterways, on which a considerable amount of traffic is constantly in motion.

It is pleasant to turn from these statistics of the progress of Antwerp as a great commercial centre and port, to consider it as the home of the numerous works of art bequeathed by the genius of the great Flemish painters. Among these Rubens and Van Dyck hold perhaps the highest place: it is at Antwerp, at all events, that many of the finest works of these two masters are to be seen and admired. Paul Rubens was the son of an Antwerp gentleman of good position who, suspected of a leaning to Calvinism, had taken refuge in Germany from the tyranny of the Inquisition. It was at Siegen, in Nassau, that he was born in 1577; and after the death of his father and the return of the family to Antwerp he was sent to school at the Jesuit College. When he had

finished his studies he became a page in the household of the Countess of Lalaing, but dissatisfied with this kind of life, he preferred to take lessons in painting from the Antwerp artist Adam van Noort, who has been styled the chief author of the Flemish Renaissance of the sixteenth century, and from Otto van Veen, a Fleming who had resided much in Italy, and occupied the office of Court painter to the Dukes of Parma.

Following, no doubt, the advice of Van Veen, Rubens set out for Italy in May 1600. He had already painted the Trinity, which is in the museum at Antwerp, and in it one can observe the special characteristics which distinguished his style throughout his life—the exuberance of form, the freshness of colour, and the somewhat excessive realism which is too often visible in many of the best efforts of his genius. Rubens passed eight years in Italy, without, however, becoming an Italian painter, although the impression made upon his style by the influence of the masterpieces of Raphael, Titian, Tintoretto, and other Italian artists is plainly perceptible. He resided at Venice, Florence, Mantua, and Rome, receiving much flattery and kindness from the nobles of the Italian Courts. At the instance of Vincent de Gonzague, Duke of Mantua, he went upon a diplomatic mission to Spain. Recalled to Antwerp in 1608 by the illness of his mother, he remained there at the intervention of the Archduke Albert and his wife Isabella.

His marriage, too, with Isabella Brandt in 1609 must have had much to do with influencing his decision to remain permanently on Flemish soil. From this time, as M. Leclercq observes, the life of Rubens was that of a "prince of art." His works accumulated with prodigious rapidity and spread throughout Europe. The Courts of Spain, England, and France vied with one another in asking for his paintings, and his own activity and power of imagination, assisted by that of his pupils, enabled him to keep pace with all demands. He has left an enormous quantity of work of all kinds, historical and religious, genre paintings, landscapes, and portraits; variously estimated at between one thousand and two thousand in number.

Antony van Dyck, the most refined of all the many pupils of Rubens, and the one whose fame approaches nearest to his own, was born at Antwerp in 1599. The tercentenary of his birth was celebrated in that town in September 1899, as we remember, by an exhibition of the artist's paintings, gathered together from the numerous galleries in Europe in which they had found a home. Those of us who beheld during the Van Dyck *fêtes* the admirably arranged pageantry of the procession of "Art across the Ages" which enlivened the crowded streets of the seaport town, will not easily forget the striking spectacle afforded on that occasion.

Van Dyck's education seems to have commenced with lessons from his mother, after which he received

instruction from Henri van Balen and later from Rubens. After spending two years at the English Court, where he executed various paintings and portraits for James I., Van Dyck set out for Italy, whence after a stay of a few years' duration he returned to England, where he married Mary Ruthven,



OSTEND: THE QUEEN OF BELGIAN WATERING-PLACES.

the daughter of a Scottish peer. It was at this period that he painted his celebrated picture of Charles I. After a short but brilliant career in London, Van Dyck died at the comparatively early age of forty-two.

Van Dyck's work is characterised by finish and refinement, rather than by boldness and vigour of

execution. There is an elegance and grace in his portraits which contrast very strikingly with those of other painters of the same school. As the portrayer of affability of manner and dignity of bearing, he is wellnigh without a rival.

Many of the finest of Rubens's pictures are to be seen in the museum close to the Avenue du Sud, in a handsome building which was formerly a Franciscan convent. The picture of Christ between the robbers, entitled the "Coup de Lance," with the Roman officer Longinus piercing the side of the Saviour with a spear, was painted for the church of the Franciscans in 1620, and is considered by many to be the finest of his works. In the museum also are "St Thérèse interceding for the Souls in Purgatory," the "Virgin and Child with a Parrot," the "Education of the Virgin," and the "Adoration of the Magi." The same building contains admirable works also by Van Dyck: the stately dark-robed portrait of Cesare Alessandro Scaglia, and the Crucifixion with St Catherine of Assisi and St Dominic, painted at his father's dying request for the Dominican nunnery at Antwerp. "The Descent from the Cross" at the Crucifixion, with the sun and the moon darkened, is also in the best style of the master. There are many other works in the collection by Teniers, Van Eyck, Roger van der Weyden, Seghers, Quintin Matsys, Rembrandt, but its chief claim to celebrity is based on the Rubenses and Van Dycks.

In the cathedral, again, are to be found three of

the masterpieces of Rubens—"The Elevation of the Cross," "The Assumption," and the splendid "The Descent from the Cross," so called from the picture on the central panel. The peculiarity of this painting is the contrast between the flesh of the dead body and the white linen sheet, a subject full of technical difficulty, which none but the greatest masters of colour have ever ventured to grapple with.

Perhaps the most delightful building in Antwerp is the Musée Plantin or Plantin-Moretus, which derives its name from Christopher Plantin, the printer, and his son-in-law, John Moretus, whose tomb and portrait are to be seen in the cathedral. Plantin emigrated to Antwerp from Tours in 1549, and became the greatest printer in Europe. At his death he bequeathed the business to his son-in-law, who carried it on in the same building as that which we now see. At length, in 1875, after seven generations of the family of Moretus had resided there, following the craft of their predecessor, the house with its contents became the property of the town of Antwerp. No alterations have been made in it, and a ramble through the building and through the beautiful courtyard, which recalls in appearance an Oxford quadrangle or cathedral cloister, gives one an admirable idea of the dwelling and adjoining business premises of a well-to-do Flemish citizen at the end of the sixteenth century. In addition to the presses, the type-foundry, and other evidences of the printers' toil, there are portraits of the Plantins by Rubens and



Van Dyck, a beautiful collection of missals and mediæval MSS., and lovely seventeenth-century cabinets of tortoise-shell and mother-of-pearl. But these are but a few of the numerous treasures stored in this charming building, where it would be easy to while away hours without once experiencing a feeling of ennui.

Another building which takes us back in fancy to the days of long ago is the Steen Museum, once the city jail, whose stone buildings will be noticed by the side of the Schelde. Besides the collection of weapons and others relics of the past, the horrible dungeons and instruments of torture, of which such terrible use was made within these walls at the time of the Inquisition, still minutely testify to the appalling cruelties of that reign of bigotry and blood.

### OSTEND

There are few watering-places in the world more interesting than the bright and fashionable town on the Belgian coast, Ostend. Brighton, Eastbourne, San Sebastian, Trouville, and Newport in America have all of them their admirers, but in one respect perhaps the Belgian watering-place may be said to bear the palm. Not only is it possessed of the bathing and other diversions to be found at the other places which I have mentioned, but there is in addition a greater variety in the crowd of visitors who make it their

resort during the short but lively summer season. There is at Ostend an opportunity wanting elsewhere of observing the different characteristics of the nations of the world. The town, in short, is cosmopolitan. Russian and Spaniard, Roumanian and Japanese, to say nothing of English and American



FISHING-BOATS AT OSTEND.

—all may be observed, taking their daily constitutional upon the Digue, lounging in the Kursaal, or amusing themselves with any of the numerous distractions which the place affords.

And these amusements are many. It seems, indeed, as if every one wished to crowd the maximum of pleasure into the comparatively short time during

which the season lasts or their purses manage to hold out. The latter is an important point, for there are few towns where money seems to make for itself wings and fly off so furiously as it does at Ostend. To begin with, the hotels are extravagantly dear: this is especially true of those on the Digue, where over a guinea a-day is sometimes asked for a room on the first floor facing the sea, the charge for meals being proportionately great. The restaurants, too, are equally dear, and the attendance often leaves much to be desired. These remarks, however, must not be taken to apply in the same degree to those hotels which are farther from the sea, or in the town itself. The large hotels upon the Digue are only open during a few months in the year, from June to September or October, and consequently their harvest is short, although no doubt extremely remunerative. Visitors who intend to spend the whole summer at Ostend usually take one of the pretty villas adjoining the Digue, the rentals of which are not so excessively high as might be imagined.

Certainly Ostend is a lively place—gymkanas, balls, concerts, motor-races, and battles of flowers succeeding one another throughout the season in the ever-varying round of festivity. The ordinary population of the town is about 30,000, but the average number of visitors is between 40,000 and 50,000, the larger proportion arriving during the month of August. In 1897, out of a total of 41,398, 10,271 were Belgians, 9742 English, 9626 French,

4868 Germans, 2189 Austrians or Hungarians, 1380 Americans, and 604 persons of Italian nationality.

The Digue, to which I have alluded, is incontestably the salient feature of the place. It consists of a stone dyke about a mile in length and twenty-five feet high, the promenade portion being laid out in terra-cotta bricks, which give it a neat and pleasing appearance. It forms thus an admirable promenade, and it is there that one notes, more particularly during the afternoon, the summer toilets of the fashionable visitors to the town. In the morning they are usually occupied with the sea-bath, and appear decorously clad in the *toilette de bain*, besporting themselves in family parties around the colony of bathing-machines which fringe the Digue in front of the Kursaal. The Kursaal is a handsome building, erected about twenty years back, and contains a fine concert-hall and ball-room, with reading-rooms and restaurant for the use of visitors. There is also a *salle de jeu*, where a good deal of money is lost during the season. To this rather dubious privilege only members of the club are admitted, and Ostend now shares with Spa the questionable advantage of being the only legally recognised resort of gamblers in the kingdom.

The effect of the Digue and Kursaal, viewed from the sea by night, when lit up by hundreds of lamps, is altogether charming. A little beyond the Kursaal, in the direction of the Hippodrome, is the royal *châlet*, where King Leopold is wont to spend a

portion of the summer. Here more than anywhere he loves to lay aside the cares of royalty and ramble about the sea-front with all the ease and freedom of the least of his subjects. Near the harbour, and rising to the height of 190 feet, is the new lighthouse, built in 1858, which commands an excellent view of the coast as far as Blankenberghe and Nieuport, while the towers of Bruges are visible inland to the east. For those who are tired of the sea, the Park Leopold, with its tennis-grounds and *laiterie*, and the Park Henriette-Marie within the town, offer an agreeable change. The fish-auctions at the market adjoining the Quai des Pêcheurs are well worth seeing, bearing evidence, as they do, to the great industry of the town. I have also found a visit to the *huîtres*, or oyster-parks, which are scattered about in the neighbourhood of the quays, not without interest. There are a great many lobsters in most of these establishments, but these of course are kept in separate tanks. They are sold at from 3 to 6 francs each, the oysters selling at from 6 to 8 francs a hundred. The salt water in which the trays containing the fish are submerged is constantly renewed. These Ostend oysters are in reality a foreign production: they are brought from England, from the beds at Whitstable, Colchester, and other celebrated localities.

The Belgian fisheries have increased immensely in value since the introduction of steam-trawlers. In 1897 the sales of fish brought in by 131 sailing-

vessels amounted to 1,380,631 francs, while those taken by the steam-trawlers produced 1,237,104 francs, representing together a total of more than £100,000 for the Belgian fisheries alone. Next, but after a long interval, according to M. Deiss, come the sales arising from the produce of the French, English, German, and Dutch vessels. The English trade has obviously fallen off, being 50,000 francs less than that of the year preceding. These steam-vessels are the property of small syndicates of fishermen, and apparently pay the satisfactory dividend of 12 per cent. It is said that a single steamer, with a crew of ten men, will make as many journeys as ten sailing-vessels manned by sixty men, and the risk of loss and danger to cargo is also less.

Each sailor receives a fixed wage of at least £5 a-month without food, as well as a certain number of the inferior kinds of fish. The captain is remunerated by a salary of £12 a-month and a share of 5 per cent on the annual profits. The engineer obtains the same salary, but nothing besides. Most of the trawlers employed in this fishery were built in England. Judged numerically, the shipping of the port of Ostend is inferior to that of Ghent. The number of ships which entered the harbour in 1897 was 1884, of which 570 were sailing under the English flag; notwithstanding this, the former port is the better known of the two, as being the Continental station of the celebrated mail service *viâ* Dover and Ostend. This was commenced in 1838. The passage

at first occupied from five to seven hours, the vessels starting from Ostend on Sundays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. By 1847 the service had become a daily institution, the adoption of faster boats, such as the *Ruby* and *Topaz*, built by the celebrated engineer Maudslay, having reduced the



ANOTHER VIEW OF OSTEND.

passage to about five hours. In that year the number of passengers was 8000.

The contract of the English company expiring in 1863, the Belgian Government decided to continue the service by means of its own employés, and the steamers *Belgique* and *Princesse Clémentine* were

provided by the Société Cockerill for the purpose. Other boats followed, some of which, owing to a difference between the Belgian Government and the Société Cockerill, were built on the Clyde by Messrs Denny of Dumbarton. At present nine boats are employed in the service, of which the Marie Henriette and the Princesse Clémentine, making twenty-two miles an hour, are the fastest.

The postal service from Dover to Ostend cannot be said to be remunerative, since it loses considerably over £30,000 a-year by its contract. The number of passengers by the route has increased enormously, and at present exceeds more than 120,000 persons in the course of the year. In 1886 only 30,000 availed themselves of the advantages of this line.

Those who have read Motley's 'History of the Netherlands' will remember the account of the famous siege of Ostend by the Archduke Albert from 1601 to 1604, when, after more than three years' hard fighting, the town was surrendered to Spinola by the order of the States-General. Everything was in ruins, and the attacking party, which had lost many thousands, gained nothing by their victory. They were, indeed, worse off than before; for while the Spaniards were occupied in endeavouring to take the port, the Dutch had in the meantime possessed themselves of three or four other towns of more or less importance. Not long after this Ostend became a pirate city. It was in vain that the Dutch attempted to prevent the vessels from leaving the harbour. In 1622 two ships



escaped the vigilance of the Dutch cruisers, while the captain of a third, a certain Jan Jacobsen, sank the Dutch admiral's vessel, and then, being overpowered by numbers, set fire to his own powder-magazine and thus perished not ingloriously.

### BLANKENBERGHE, LE COQ, NIEUPORT

A pleasant but quieter watering-place than Ostend is Blankenberghe—or Blankenberghe la Belle, as the town has been denominated by those who love it best. It lies about twelve miles to the north-east, among the dunes, to the whiteness of which the name of Blankenberghe is due. The town was the scene of a dreadful catastrophe in the fourteenth century, when the sea swept away the greater portion of the place. Other inundations followed at intervals, and probably it would still be looked upon as a dangerous locality but for the efficient breakwaters constructed at the commencement of the present century.

Although the ordinary population is small—no more than 4000—nearly 30,000 visitors find their way to Blankenberghe in the course of the year. The charges are much less exorbitant than is the case at its great rival, Ostend; there is, too, the usual Kursaal, with its concerts and dances, and the bathing from the sands leaves nothing to be desired. In the promenade-pier, built in English fashion, like



ON THE CANAL, BRUGES.

that of Brighton and other towns on the South Coast, the town possesses an attraction such as no other Belgian watering-place can boast of.

In appearance the Digue resembles that of Ostend. It is about a mile in length, with handsome hotels and villas lighted up in the evening by electricity. Altogether Blankenberghe strikes one as a place where there is less expense, less noise, and less of what one may call snobbishness than we find at her more demonstrative, imposing neighbour.

A quaint little spot, on the steam-tramway line between the two, is Le Coq (or Den Haan, as they call it in Flemish), dumped down upon the dunes, on a property given by the State, much after the manner of a child's village of cardboard, the small hotels and Kursaal, with a few trim villas, rising amongst the dwarf plantations with a kind of jaunty air which seems to challenge the admiration of the spectator. Not that there is much to admire or to notice about the little colony beyond its neatness, except as to how it comes to find itself in this barren place at all.

But no doubt, the land costing nothing, the speculators, who run what there is of the village will have no reason to be dissatisfied with their investment in the years to come. All Belgium in the course of the summer months rushes off to the coast, or to the Ardennes; and numerous strangers, as I have before

remarked, come to swell the throng at one or other of the few watering-places which now exist ; and thus there is an ever-increasing demand for fresh enterprise in the creation of new resorts. These are usually started by syndicates of capitalists, and as everything is arranged with a view to the future prosperity of the place, the work is generally well planned and successfully carried out.

Other places which are yearly growing in importance are Heyst-sur-Mer, a few miles to the east of Blankenberghe ; Knocke, on the line of tramway between Heyst and Bruges ; and Wenduyn, to the west of Blankenberghe. Mariakerke and Middelkerke, to the west of Ostend, and the harbour and watering-place of Nieuport, are also worth the trouble of a visit.

The last mentioned is about ten miles from Ostend, and was at one time a harbour of considerable importance. At the beginning of the fifteenth century the town was noted as much for the rapacity of its pirates as for the flourishing condition of its commerce. Later on, in 1484, it fell into the hands of the Germans, whose garrison shortly after was compelled to undergo a siege at the hands of the French, commanded by the Sire de Crèvecœur, who, enraged at the firmness of their resistance, filled up the harbour with sand from the adjoining dykes.

It was under the walls of Nieuport that in 1600

Maurice of Orange, the second son of William the Silent, defeated the Archduke Albert, who, wounded above the eye by a blow from a pike, only escaped through the devotion of one of his Flemish adherents. To avenge the insult, the Archduke laid siege to Ostend, which he took after it had made an obstinate resistance. In 1658 Turenne fought the celebrated "Battle of the Dunes" against the Spaniards under Condé and John of Austria, in the neighbourhood of Nieuport. In 1794 the port came into the possession of the French. Napoleon appears to have thought of improving the condition of the harbour, but afterwards turned his attention in the direction of Antwerp.

The roadstead of Nieuport is excellent, and although the navigation of the port has long ceased to be of any great value to the country, the municipality of the town still entertains the idea of extending the harbour in such a manner as to render it accessible to ships of the largest tonnage.

In addition to the various methods of resisting the encroachments of the sea on the Belgian coast by means of ingeniously constructed breakwaters of different kinds, much attention is given to the planting of the Canada poplar, larch, birch, and other trees suitable to the sandy and ever-shifting soil of the dunes. Two or three centuries ago this would have been unnecessary, for we find that in 1682 the inhabitants of some of the villages complained to the magistrates of Furnes of the ravages caused by the

stags, which found shelter in the great forest, of which the trees remained so late as the commencement of the nineteenth century. But this has long passed away, and it is of the destruction caused to the young plantations by the rabbits, which, curiously enough, figure on the arms of Nieuport-Bains, that the natives now complain.

## BRUGES

Half an hour by rail from Ostend one finds oneself in the quiet town of Bruges. "Bruges la morte," or Bruges the dead, as it is ironically termed by those who do not inhabit it, is perhaps the most typical of all the older cities of Belgium. Antwerp, Brussels, Liège, even Ghent, have all to some extent kept pace with the times, and become in a measure modernised ; but Bruges remains the same as ever, with the charm of old-world fancies and associations still clinging to the walls of her ancient buildings, many of which still breathe forth the beauty that is the special attribute of calm decay. It matters little whether we arrive at Bruges from Brussels or from Ostend : the moment one leaves the station and sets foot in the place, one feels that he is treading, so to speak, on enchanted ground. We are carried back in thought, whether we wish it or not, to the reign of fancy and medieval romance ; recollections of Charles V., Maximilian of Germany, and Mary of

Burgundy blend themselves in bewildering confusion with visions of the masterpieces which the painters Memling, David, and Van Eyck have bequeathed to be the delight of our own and other generations. Now Memling is so much the artistic genius of the place, and his work, the "Châsse de St Ursula," in the Hospital of St John, is so evidently the shrine to which most pilgrims to Bruges direct their steps, that a few words about the building, the painter, and his subject may suitably find mention in this place, before we proceed to investigate the other attractions of the town.

The Hospital of St John was founded as far back as the twelfth century, and has undergone little alteration since that date. Those who like to see the manner in which the sick are tended by the kind Augustinian nuns in charge of the building have perfect liberty to do so. It was of this hospital that Thackeray penned the charming description in the 'Roundabout Papers':—

And Hans Memling at Bruges! Have you never seen that dear old Hospital of St John, on passing the gate of which you enter the fifteenth century? I see the wounded soldier still lingering in the house, and tended by the kind grey sisters; his little panel on its easel is placed at the light, he covers his board with the most wondrous, beautiful little figures, in robes as bright as rubies and amethysts. I think he must have a magic glass in which he catches the reflection of little cherubs, with many-coloured wings, very little and bright; angels in long crisp robes of white come and flutter across the mirror, and he draws them.

Of Memling himself not much is known. Neglecting the legend (probably apocryphal) that after being wounded at the battle of Nancy he was taken to the Hospital of St John, where he painted the pictures which we see, in gratitude for the kindness shown to him by the nuns, we may assume that he was a person of education who had travelled. This we gather from the views of Cologne and other places on the Rhine, which are to be observed in his pictures.

It is known that he died at Bruges in 1495, but the date of his birth is unknown, nor is his nationality by any means certain. He appears, however, to have resided in Bruges for a period of about twenty years, and may fairly be claimed as one of the Flemish painters. Some think that he was a pupil of Roger van der Weyden, a Brussels painter of considerable merit, who executed four great compositions, now destroyed, for the Hôtel de Ville of that city. But little save the fact that he was a person of some position in the town has been faithfully recorded, and the life of Memling must be regarded as one of the riddles of the century in which he lived. His work remains, and for beauty, both of conception and of vigorous execution, is scarcely to be surpassed.

The *châsse*, which contains the arm of St Ursula, is a small Gothic chapel in miniature. The different scenes in the life of the saint are painted on the panels with a finish and attention to detail nothing



less than exquisite. The legend of St Ursula, the British princess, who was martyred by the Huns, together with her train of maidens, on returning from Rome, is too long to be quoted here, but Crowe's description of the scenes depicted on the panels of the shrine is to the point and must not be omitted:—

Of the six designs on the long sides, one represents the fleet arriving at Cologne, where Ursula prepares to land with her companions. We recognise the shape of the old cathedral, the steeples of several churches and one of the city towers, most of them true to nature but not in their proper places. In one of the distant houses Ursula sees the vision of the Pope bidding her to visit Rome. Another scene is laid on the quays of Bâle, where St Ursula has taken to the shore, whilst a part of her suite awaits its turn to disembark.

A third shows the Pope surrounded by his Court in the porch of a church awaiting St Ursula, who kneels on the steps leading up to the portal. In a gallery close by, the British neophytes are baptised and confessed, or partake of the Holy Communion.

The Pope, in the fourth picture, accompanies the maidens on their return to Bâle. He sits with his Cardinals in the vessel which carries St Ursula, whilst the suite of both still winds through the passes leading from the Alps.

On the fifth panel the background is a camp on the Rhine shore, where boats have landed some of their living freight, and others approach with crowded loads; the knights and virgins are set upon by soldiers, and are vainly defended by their steel-clad champions.

The sixth picture is that in which St Ursula is seen in a

passive attitude of prayer, awaiting the arrow of an executioner, the men about her, armed in "proof" or shrouded in mantles, are spectators or actors in the massacre of the saint's companions; the distance is filled with tents, behind which the Kölner Dom rears its solid walls.

The other pictures by Memling in the same room are all worthy of a more than cursory examination, notably the triptych containing the "Adoration of the Magi," which was painted in 1479; and the diptych representing Martin von Nieuwenhoven, the donor of the picture, adoring the Madonna.

The triptych at the end of the room, painted for the church of the hospital and entitled the "Marriage of St Catherine," contains a graphic view of the vision of the Apocalypse and scenes from the life of St John the Baptist, who in one place is represented burning in a caldron of boiling oil. In addition to these, one remarks St Barbara reading, and St Catherine kneeling, with her wheel beside her, as well as Jan Floreins, the donor of the picture, and two or three officials of the hospital, under the protection of their patron saints.

From the hospital down the Rue St Catherine to the museum is but a short distance. Here again we find a noticeable picture of Memling—the triptych containing the figures of St Christopher wading through the stream with the infant Christ on his shoulder, St Egidius with the wounded doe, and St Maurus reading. The two pictures of the Last Judgment by Prévost and Pourbus, Jan van Eyck's por-

trait of his wife, and J. van Oost the elder's pictures of St Antony and the Holy Child, and St Antony resuscitating a dead man, must not be overlooked. But the work which will probably attract most attention is the great masterpiece of Gerard David, "The Punishment of the Unjust Judge." The scenes which represent the bribery, sentence, and execution of Sisamnes are admirably portrayed. The flaying of the unfortunate man is too gruesome and horrible to be described in detail, but it gives one a deep and lasting impression of the marvellous power of the painter's art.

The Church of Notre Dame, near the hospital, contains the beautiful marble tomb of Charles the Bold, and that of Mary of Burgundy, who died, as we remember, from a fall from her horse whilst hawking in the neighbourhood of Bruges. In the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, at the end of the right aisle, is the beautiful white marble "Madonna and Child" of Michael Angelo. The subject is set off to advantage by the black marble of the niche in which it rests. De Crayer's "Adoration of the Infant Jesus," and the "Adoration of the Wise Men" by Seghers, on the west wall, are both worth inspection. "The Seven Sorrows of Mary," on the north side of the choir, by an unknown master, and the "Adoration of the Shepherds" by Pourbus, containing the portrait of the donor, Sire Josse de Damhoudere, are among the other works of art which adorn the building.

The church itself, an early Gothic structure dating

from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, replaces an early chapel built upon the same site long before this. The brick tower, with its tall brick spire, rises to the height of nearly 400 feet. A beautiful little walled-up porch designated "Paradise" is to be noticed on the north side of the building.

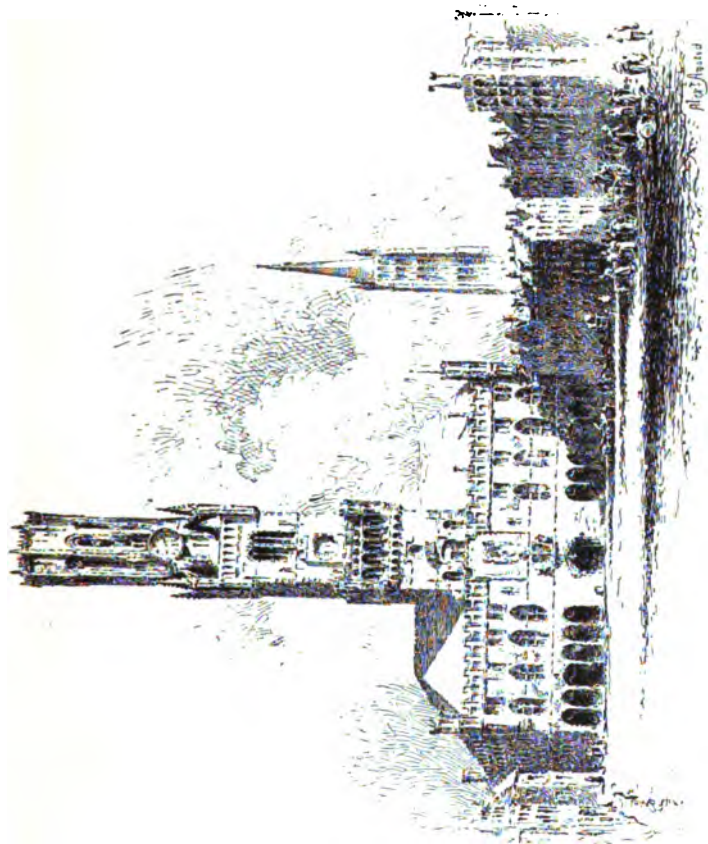
The old cathedral of Bruges, dedicated to St Donatian, was destroyed by the French during the Revolution in 1799; but the name was afterwards given to the church of St Sauveur, the present cathedral of Bruges. This is a fourteenth-century Gothic building of brick, with a square tower, and has no special claim to architectural beauty externally; within, however, the effect is not unattractive. The two handsome brasses at the entrance to the baptistery and the font itself are worth examining. There is an admirable picture, the "Last Supper," painted by Peter Pourbus for the Guild of the Holy Sacrament, and another work by F. Pourbus, the son of the former, which was painted for the Guild of Shoemakers, whose chapel is close by. The patrons of the craft, St Crispinus and St Crispianus, are to be seen with their shoemakers' knives, on the outside of the picture, while within are the members of the guild.

Other remarkable pictures are the "Martyrdom of St Hippolytus" by Dierick Bouts, the "Descent from the Cross" by Clœissens, and the portrait of Philippe le Beau, bearing the collar of the Golden Fleece. The arms of the knights of this order, which was

founded at Bruges in 1429 by Duke Philippe le Bon, are to be seen above the carved stalls in the choir.

Perhaps the most interesting spot in all Bruges is the Grand Place, or Market-Place, which is full of handsome and historic buildings. The tall square tower which dominates the Place is the famous belfrey, begun in 1291, with the balcony, from which the laws were read out to the people gathered together in the Square below, and the carillon, whose pleasant chimes ring out only too pertinaciously throughout the day. On the west of the palace is the castle-like building called the Lion de Flandre, said to have been occupied by Charles II. of England during his exile, when he was created king of the crossbowmen of St Sebastian by the townsmen. In the next house, the Croenenburg, Maximilian, King of the Romans, was imprisoned for two weeks in February 1488, because he would not give over his son Philip into the charge of the French king. Nor was Maximilian released until he had sworn on his knees, before an altar erected in the Square, that he would resign his claims to the guardianship of his son, respect the liberties of Bruges, and grant a general amnesty for all past offences against himself. He made the oath on the Sacrament, the relics of Donatus, and a fragment of the true cross, but broke it not long after at the suggestion of his father, the Emperor Frederick IV.

On the south of the Square is the Hôtel de Ville,



THE HALLS, BRUGES.

with its beautiful sculptures on the outside. The building was completed about 1387. On the right is the Chapelle du Saint Sang, so called from some drops of the holy blood of the Saviour, said to have been preserved by Joseph of Arimathea, which Theodoric of Alsace, Count of Flanders, brought back from Palestine during the Crusades, and presented to the city of Bruges. Theodoric built a chapel to receive these relics in 1150, and this still forms the first floor of the present building. The second chapel above was built in the fifteenth century, and it is there that the sacred relic is now preserved. The phial containing the blood is exhibited every Friday in order that it may receive the veneration of the faithful.

The Museum of the Brotherhood of the Holy Blood, belonging to the chapel, contains a bejewelled silver reliquary, or *châsse*, in which the blood is carried in procession once a-year at the beginning of May. On the right wall is the celebrated triptych of Gerard David, representing the Descent from the Cross. There are also some good portraits by Pourbus of members of the "Confraternity of the Holy Blood." In the chapel itself are depicted scenes representing the history of our Lord's Passion and the transference of the holy blood to Bruges by means of the Flemish crusaders.

The gilded building on the left of the Hôtel de Ville, bearing the date 1537, is the Maison de l'Ancien Greffe, in which the town records were originally

kept ; while on the north stands the Palais de Justice, once belonging to the Franc de Bruges, an independent district beyond the town, including the cities of Dunkirk and Gravelines. It contains a splendid chimney-piece of black marble and carved oak with statues representing the figures, almost as large as life, of Charles V., Charles the Bold, Maximilian, and Mary of Burgundy.

Such are a few, though very few, of the many beautiful relics of the past greatness of Bruges, which attained its zenith at the commencement of the fifteenth century, when the Dukes of Burgundy held their Court in the town. The rise of English ports and commerce, the decline of the Hanseatic League, of which Bruges had been the central mart, the growth of Antwerp, and the silting up of the Zwyn, all contributed to the decay of a town which once possessed a population of nearly 200,000 souls. At the present time there are no more than 50,000, of whom a considerable percentage are beggars.

It seems probable, however, that the construction of a canal between Bruges and Heyst, deep enough for the passage of the largest vessels, will give back to the former town some of that importance which she possessed in the middle ages, when thirty-four nations frequented her harbour and vessels entered the port bearing the produce of every clime. Experts go so far as to say that the new port thus created will be, "after Cherbourg, the best on the French, Belgian, or Dutch coasts." This is high praise, and



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as it is expected that the works now in progress will be finished in September 1902, we may hope that the new era of commercial prosperity for which the town has waited patiently during four centuries will not be postponed much longer.



THE BELFRY, BRUGES.

## THE HOLIDAY GROUND OF BELGIUM

### THE LIÉGE DISTRICT AND THE ARDENNES

THERE are to my mind few tracts of country more delightful than that portion of Belgium, known to us as the Ardennes, which extends from Liége and Namur on the north as far as Germany, to Luxemburg on the south-east, and on the west to the valley of the Semois. Lovely streams, such as the Ourthe, the Amblève, the Lesse, with the more copious waters of the tranquil Meuse, wind their devious courses through the wooded valleys of this pleasant land. Ruined castles poised aloft on beetling crags recall the grandeur of feudal chivalry, while the contrast of the ancient and the new is brought out into stronger relief by many a handsome château of more recent date. For the Belgian of fortune dearly loves a country-house to which he may withdraw for a while from the turmoil and worry of business, say in Brussels, Antwerp, or Liége, and spend his time with family or chosen friends in quiet seclusion and in outdoor pursuits by the side of some meandering stream.

To his countrymen whose purses are of more moderate capacity, again, an excursion during August or September to one of the comfortable country inns that are to be found in all parts of the Ardennes seems to offer an attraction scarcely to be resisted. There Paterfamilias, freed from the preoccupations of city toil, and as often as not clad in garments that are of last year's make, is seen endeavouring to lure from its haunt beneath the bank the speckled trout or the silver-hued grayling, his wife deftly knitting by the river-side, regarding his efforts with a pensive or perchance amused smile, while the children, who have found a quiet spot in which to bathe, make the air re-echo with peals of merry laughter. Or one may see the family starting betimes in the morning for an excursion to some distant height whence a fine view of the surrounding country may be obtained. Some of the boys, perhaps, will be carrying japanned tin boxes slung around their backs, in which they intend to place such rare plants or fungi as they may chance to discover, or the inevitable kodak will be there with which the snap-shots are to be taken that will help to charm the Christmas party during the coming winter at Brussels or Namur. Then on their return in the evening, tired but happy, they group round the well-spread table at the Hôtel des Étrangers or the Hôtel Bellevue, or whatsoever hostelry may be favoured with their presence, and later on perhaps join their friends in a musical evening or at a dance, for the Belgians are devoted

to dancing, and are by no means wont to take their pleasure sadly as some other nations are said to do. Then, too, the bicycle is a great resource to the Belgian when keeping holiday, and the Touring Club de Belgique has smoothed away many of the difficulties which beset the cyclist in their country. Such a kind of life as I have depicted is lived by many a family in each ensuing year; though usually as each summer comes round fresh ground will be chosen in which to spend the precious and all too short outing. Nor when the good time comes to an end, and the children go back to school, and the father to the task of money-making, and the mother to her household cares once more, need they feel qualms on the score of extravagance such as so often follow on our seaside holiday in England. The bill here in the quiet Belgian village is really ridiculously small. Five francs a-day, not including wine or beer, is the average charge throughout the Ardennes, while a family staying for a time can obtain a further reduction; so that probably their joint-expenses are as small as if they had remained at home, and possibly are even less.

These facts have frequently been borne upon my mind during a recent visit to the Liège district and the Ardennes, of which I propose to give some account in this chapter. My wish is to indicate not only the general characteristics of the country through which I passed, but also those little details of country

life which struck me as being typical of the Belgian in his summer holiday.

I had frequently been in the Ardennes, but had usually spent much time in the same places; consequently in the summer of 1899 I determined to avail myself of the facilities afforded by the *abonnement* tickets which are now granted to travellers, in order to see as large an extent of country as possible, in the somewhat limited space of time at my disposal. The *abonnement* ticket, it may be observed, is issued at the price of 45 francs second class, and permits the holder to travel on any of the State railways in Belgium—it certainly seems a pity that the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg is not included; while, if the ticket is given up on the day after the expiration of the tour, 5 francs are returned to the holder. A photograph of the traveller must be handed to the clerk at the ticket-office when application is made for the season ticket. The photograph must be on paper, not on card-board, and it is gummed to the *abonnement* ticket by the railway authorities themselves.

Duly armed with such a pass, and with no more luggage than I could conveniently carry myself, I set out from Brussels for Liège, pausing only on the way at Louvain to admire its handsome Gothic Hôtel de Ville, and the beautiful church of St Peter with its quaintly carved pulpit. The subject of the latter is the Denial of St Peter and the Conversion of St Paul. Lofty palm-trees of wood surround the figures. The squirrel carved on one of the branches struck

me as particularly realistic; the horse, too, and its fallen rider certainly merit for a moment one's attention. A ramble round the town in search of some of the smaller churches led me through extremely intricate and dirty streets, swarming with barefooted children, and so strewn with mussel-shells that I began to wonder whether that nutritious mollusc constituted the staple article of diet of the poorer populace of Louvain. Being myself in want of something more substantial than this kind of fare, I entered an attractive-looking restaurant not far from the Hôtel de Ville, where I had no difficulty in obtaining a satisfactory repast. The only other persons dining were two bicyclists, undoubtedly of British nationality, who appeared to have considerable trouble in interpreting their *menu* and in making the waiter understand what they wanted. I ventured to offer to help them. To my surprise the difficulty was a very small one. What was the French for "cherries"? The word was before them on the *carte*, the fruit was upon the adjoining table before their eyes, but their ignorance of a very simple word had so far proved a barrier to the realisation of their wishes. The matter was soon settled, and a due supply of the fruit in question being forthcoming, we set ourselves to discuss our respective routes, and thereby to while away a very pleasant half hour. One of the cyclists was a clergyman, the other obviously a man of some degree of education; and it struck me at the time as odd that want of knowledge of so trifling a detail as the

French names for common kinds of fruit should be a stumbling-block to people of their attainments. A German would be unlikely to experience a similar difficulty; probably, however, the average Frenchman or Belgian would fare little better in England



AN ARDENNES VALLEY.

in the same circumstances, since neither possesses the gift of tongues.

But to return to Louvain and its attractions. Undoubtedly the present glory of the town is the beautiful Hôtel de Ville, the masterpiece of the architect De Leyens. Five centuries have impaired somewhat the delicacy of its masonry, and as lately as

1890 it has suffered from lightning; but the general effect is admirable, and surpasses that of the town-halls of Brussels, Ghent, and Bruges. Sculptured groups from the Old Testament, with statues representing personages eminent in the history of Belgium and Louvain, ornament the façades of this handsome structure. The interior contains some historical frescoes by Hennebicq, and a not uninteresting museum of local antiquities, but in no sense can it compare with the wonderful exterior.

The past fame of Louvain rests upon its University, in the sixteenth century the first in Europe, and at the time of the celebrated Lipsius frequented by 6000 students. At the present moment there are less than one-third of that number, and of its forty-three colleges only some twenty now remain. I was conducted over one of them, the College of St Esprit, by a courteous professor, and was greatly interested by the excellent arrangements made for the wellbeing of the students in that handsome building. Since 1835 the University has ceased to belong to the State, and has been maintained by the Roman Catholics as their own University.

From Louvain to Liège the rail led me through the plain of Neerwinden, a district extremely flat, but rich with the promise of golden harvest. Two great battles have rendered the field of Neerwinden memorable. It was here that William III. of England was defeated by Luxembourg, and that a century



later Dumouriez and the French were vanquished by the Austrians.

On approaching Liége one is struck with the abruptness of the descent. As the train advances slowly towards the city, checked by powerful brakes, the beautiful valley appears far below. On the return journey from Liége towards Brussels engines are employed not only to draw, but to push the train from behind up the steep incline. At one time cables were used, but the present method seems to answer efficiently. Of Liége itself much might be said. Its handsome public buildings, and clean pleasant boulevards, its noble river, the vivacity and industry of its inhabitants, and the extraordinary beauty of its surroundings make it unquestionably one of the most interesting of European cities. Here especially one finds the fruits of the keen and energetic disposition of the Walloon, ever alert to improve by labour the resources which nature has placed at his command.

Nowhere was I more struck by this than during a visit which, through the courtesy of the director, I was able to pay to the Établissement Cockerill at Seraing. Thousands of workmen are employed in the ironworks belonging to the company. Steamboats, such as those from Dover to Ostend, engines, and rails are the chief objects of construction. The Bessemer process of converting steel may be seen here to perfection; and as one gazes at the workmen,

like the Vulcans or Cyclops of heathen mythology, stripped to the waist, their hard, dust-begrimed forms trickling with sweat beneath the sweltering rays of the glowing August sun and the yet fiercer blaze of the furnace, one remembers that they are the descendants of the turbulent Liégois of medieval times who took and gave hard knocks with equal zest in the cause of freedom.

And yet, too, it is not without a thrill of genuine satisfaction that one recalls that John Cockerill, the founder of the works, was an Englishman, and that it is perchance his motto, "Courage to the last," which still stimulates the efforts of these industrious Walloons. To Cockerill were due the introduction of steam-engines on the Continent and the working of iron by English processes. He died in 1840 at Warsaw, on his way to Russia to establish workshops for machinery in that kingdom. Liége, his country by adoption, has given his name to one of its quays; Seraing has named a street after him, and has erected a statue to his memory; while yet another statue has been placed in Brussels by his former secretary M. Rau. The present company was formed after Cockerill's death and carries on his work with great success. The handsome white building through which one obtains entrance to the works was once the palace of the Prince Bishops of Liége. How little could they have foreseen that one day their quiet retreat on the banks of the placid Meuse was

to become the seat of the largest manufactory of machinery in Europe, if not in the world!

Besides its numerous industries, there is much to be seen in Liége. The Palais de Justice with its attractive courts, the second of which reminds one much of an Oxford quadrangle, its archæological museum with a collection of antiquities rivalling that of Namur in value and interest, the University, and the Cathedral and Church of St Jacques, all repay the trouble of a visit. The views of the Meuse from the bridges, and, better still, from the top of the citadel, are particularly fine, and give one a good idea of not only the beauty but the prosperity of the town as well.

From Liége to Spa is no great distance, the line following the beautiful valley of the Vesdre, and passing the famous ninth-century ruins of Franchimont. It was from Franchimont, that the 600 marched to Liége in 1468 to help their countrymen against Charles the Bold and Louis XI., who were besieging that town. They perished to a man, and Duke Charles, enraged at the insult, devastated Franchimont with fire and sword. Some years afterwards William de la Marck, "the wild boar of the Ardennes," took up his residence here, and strengthened the fortifications. During the French Revolution the ruins were sold as national property.

Of Spa itself, one of the best-known places in Belgium, I shall say little. I arrived there on a warm summer evening, and strolling past the casino

noticed a large number of well-dressed people outside the theatre during the *entr'acte*. I was informed that the Queen of the Belgians (who, by the way, had only recently recovered from a serious illness) was present; hence the prices had been doubled. Being late, it was scarcely worth while to take a seat for the play, which, unless my memory is at fault, was that of "La Poupée." In my attempt to obtain an entrance into the Salle de Jeu I was unsuccessful. I was not a member of the Cercle, so the gorgeously attired flunkey at the door courteously informed me. To become a member of that celebrated club, and to share in the questionable privilege of losing money at the gambling-tables, one must have his name put up to ballot. At one time this was unnecessary, and any one was admitted to the tables, but since 1872 the rooms have been closed to all excepting a privileged few; no doubt a wise arrangement, for much misery used to be caused amongst workmen and others of small means who would place upon the hazard of one fatal plunge the earnings of a month, or even more.

The extreme warmth of the weather made the draughts from the Pouhon or spring, at which Peter the Great so often quenched his thirst, most refreshing. It is to the medicinal virtues of this and of the other fifteen springs that the prosperity of Spa was originally due, and it is probable that were gambling quite abolished in this watering-place a large number of visitors would still continue to

frequent the spot, attracted by its pleasant surroundings and its advantages as a health-resort. The bathing establishment, with its pretty garden decorated with flowers in stone baskets, is another agreeable feature in the place. In a word, the general effect of the little town, encircled by pretty woods and hills, with its neat villas, smart shops, and throngs of health-seeking or pleasure-loving visitors, is charming in every respect.

If Spa is gay and animated, I fear that I cannot say the same of the neighbouring watering-place of Chaudfontaine, a pretty spot, closely shut in by the hills which rise above the river Vesdre not far from Liège. Like Spa, Chaudfontaine has its Kursaal, but instead of animation and life, dulness reigns supreme. That the little town, or rather village, is beautiful no one would deny, but except on a Sunday, when visitors come over from Liège, it is stagnation itself. Still, there is an excellent hotel, and the short distance from Liège and the good service of trains might render the place quite endurable to any one who was wearied with the gaieties of Spa. The warm spring from which the place takes its name is situated on an island in the Vesdre, the water used for the baths being pumped up by a wheel turned by the stream. The temperature of the spring is about 104° Fahrenheit. A good road connects Chaudfontaine with Liège, and on the Sunday which I spent there it was only too greatly frequented by ubiquitous cyclists;

who came in shoals from the adjoining town; bicycles, tandems, petroleum-cycles, and motor-cars making the single street of the village by no means agreeable to passengers, and raising such clouds of dust as tempted one to regret the days of the eighteenth-century Walloon drama, in which the water-coach from Liège to Chaudfontaine is described as the recognised means of conveyance of the more leisurely but not less merry bands of pleasure-seekers.

From Chaudfontaine I made an interesting excursion to Verviers and the famous barrage of La Gileppe. Verviers is a fine, clean-looking town of more than 50,000 inhabitants, with large factories of cloth, which were established as far back as the last century. The annual export amounts in value to more than three millions sterling, while woollen yarn also is spun in large quantities. It is from Verviers that the clothing of the Belgian army is supplied, and, together with its suburbs Hodimont, Dison, and Ensival, the town may fairly be said to have earned its designation, "the Belgian Manchester." For a place of such size it seemed to me to be strikingly lacking in good hotels, nor did there appear to be much in the city to interest any one except the man of business or the commercial traveller. A monument in the Place du Martyr recalled the memory of the unfortunate Chapuis, who was put to death in 1794 on account of his revolutionary tendencies by the Prince Bishop

of Liège. The outskirts of Verviers, however, are pretty, and not at all what one would expect in the vicinity of so many factories.

It was to supply Verviers with a sufficient quantity of water that the great reservoir of La Gileppe was constructed. With this, or rather with the barrage which dams up the reservoir above the valley of the Gileppe, I was more than satisfied. In order to obtain a view of this triumph of engineering skill I took the train to Dolhain-Limbourg, a town with a double name, but really one and the same city. Limbourg, the old feudal fortress of the Counts of Limbourg, towers above the more modern Dolhain, which, indeed, is a very ordinary and humdrum place, scarcely worth a visit for its own sake. I noticed, however, a bicycle factory which bespoke the march of progress, and several factories connected with the woollen industry. When I entered the church at Dolhain the *curé* was engaged in catechising the children; no doubt the good man has ere now forgiven the interruption. I fear that he is by no means the only village priest whom I disturbed in the course of my peregrinations, for as the churches in Belgium are nearly always shut after twelve o'clock, it was necessary to visit them before that hour, or about the time of the evening service, when they were again accessible to the public. On this particular occasion there was nothing to see, the structure being quite ordinary. Leaving Dolhain,

therefore, I hastened uphill, for it was nearly noon, to the more interesting church of St George's at Limbourg.

This building is extremely old and has undergone frequent repairs. There is a twelfth-century crypt beneath the choir, and the tomb, discovered as recently as 1834, of Marie Eléonore of Baden, the wife of the Prince of Nassau-Siegen who surrendered Limbourg to the Prince de Condé in 1675. A great fire in 1834 destroyed a portion of the church and thirty-seven of the adjoining houses. Formerly the church was connected by subterranean passage with the château, which dates from the eleventh century, and was a bone of contention for the possession of which Spaniards, Dutch, and French each strove in turn. Ultimately it was taken and destroyed by Louis XIV. in 1675. A modern château commanding an admirable view occupies the site of the ancient fortress.

Descending the hill through the lime-tree avenue, I engaged a carriage to convey me to the barrage of the Gileppe, only a few miles beyond, the road passing for some distance between shady woods, bright with the berries of the mountain-ash, with here and there a cluster of wild raspberries. The barrage is incontestably a wonderful feat of engineering. It consists of an embankment 256 yards long, crossing the valley of the Gileppe. The lake formed by the barrage is 150 feet deep and covers an area of 200 acres. The cost of construction



amounted to seven million francs. In the middle of the barrage is a figure of the Belgian lion, 43 feet in height, the work of the sculptor Bouré. Eugène Bidaut, the engineer who designed the barrage, died in 1868, leaving the work to be carried out between the years 1869 and 1878. To one standing on the bridge and looking down into the valley below the whole effect is exceedingly picturesque. One feels that the Belgian lion has something to be proud of, and that he is less out of place here than on the arid mound at Waterloo. Coming down the steep hill which leads in the direction of Goé, I remarked one of those useful warnings to cyclists which the Belgian Touring Club, like our own organisation in England, is in the habit of placing on dangerous hills. I observed too, soon after, a notice respecting cruelty to animals, which, I regret to say, is not altogether uncalled for. How often, indeed, in Belgium I have seen a weakly horse struggling to draw a load unmistakably beyond his strength I should hesitate to say.

My next excursion was to Namur, that pleasant town at the confluence of the Sambre and the Meuse. The first-named river looked to me extremely dirty, and probably was so, for though the day was very warm I did not observe the throngs of children bathing in it as I afterwards noticed in the adjoining Meuse. From the citadel is a superb outlook, commanding the confluence of the two

rivers and the valley of the Meuse. It was on this height that the castle of the Counts of Namur stood formerly; in 1691 they were replaced by the strong fortress of Cohorn, the famous Dutch engineer and rival of Vauban. Taken in 1695 by William III. of England, the occasion on which, as readers of Sterne will remember, Uncle Toby received his famous wound, and partially demolished by Joseph II., Cohorn's fortress was restored in 1817 by the Dutch. For many years it had ceased to be regarded as a first-class fortress, but now is surrounded by a circle of nine detached forts, the maintenance of a perfectly defended line of communication with Liége and the Meuse valley being deemed of the utmost importance in the event of an invasion. These forts were commenced in 1882 and finished in 1892, and belong to the latest type of fortification inaugurated by General Brialmont.

The immediate neighbourhood of the citadel itself has come into the hands of the civic authorities, who have done much to beautify the spot by laying out a handsome park on the Plateau du Donjon, at the back of the citadel. This has been done through the generosity of the present king, who employed his own architect for the purpose. In the course of a conversation in which I engaged with an inhabitant of Namur respecting the fine panorama of town and country viewed from the citadel, the worthy man informed me that frequently

as a boy he had played amongst the fortifications without ever remarking the magnificent prospect at his feet, but that when arrived at manhood he went out into the world and saw the flat plains of Flanders and of Brabant, he was filled with amazement at his previous want of observation. No doubt it is the same with most of us all the world over. Ruskin indeed goes so far as to say that it is only persons of mature age who can adequately appreciate a beautiful landscape, and that children and youths are too much under the influence of other feelings to care for striking or lovely scenery. Probably there is much truth in this. Certainly my informant would seem to be a case in point.

Namur possesses several fine churches; of these probably St Loup, with its curiously fretted roof and red marble pillars, is the most interesting from an architectural point of view. The cathedral, built in the Corinthian style on the site of the old church of St Aubin, is one of the handsomest modern churches in Belgium.

The museum of Namur is said to contain the most complete exhibition of local archæology to be found in Europe. I could have lingered many hours in it, examining the wonderful collection of antiquities. Ante-Roman and Frankish remains, skulls from the caverns of Marche-les-Dames, bronzes from Ciney, Jambes, and Franchimont, fifth-century glasses and hatchets from Eprave, pieces from the Norman villas at Anthée and Flavion,—these are only a few of the

treasures of its ancient and well-arranged store. I specially remarked also a plan of the siege of Namur in 1695 by William III., an eleventh-century sarcophagus from the church at Hastière, and a pyramidal tabernacle of the fifteenth century from Barvaux; but to enumerate further would be to trespass on the excellent catalogue published by the Namur Archæological Society. Apparently Namur is not only well built and healthy, but a very lively and agreeable place of residence, with plenty of concerts and other amusements. And by its situation it is a capital centre from which to explore the neighbouring Ardennes.

When the weather is fine and time is of little importance the delightful journey of three and a half hours down the Meuse to Dinant on the comfortable boats of the Namur Tourist Society ought certainly to be taken in preference to the railway route. I made it on a warm day, and was amused to watch the bathers here and there bobbing up and down, close to the bank as a rule, and not venturing out into the swifter current in mid-stream. One swimmer I noticed, however, who was evidently desirous of signalling himself beyond the rest. With a flag in one hand he swam to meet the boat, and continued to wave it aloft for some time after we had left him behind. We gave him a parting cheer, which was not altogether undeserved.

There are some beautiful modern châteaux and parks on the banks here, but it is the natural scenery

of rock and river that most entrances the eye. That curious arch, the Rock of the Arcade, pierced by nature through the solid cliff, which meets the view at Profondeville, and the singular crag, termed the Roche aux Corneilles, near Yvoir, are sure to attract attention. But the old castles and ruins must not be passed by without a word. Poilvache and Crève-Cœur, bereft of their former pride, look down upon us as we glide by. The first, a feudal fortress of early date, was wrecked by the French in 1554. Some of its towers still remain. To Crève-Cœur and the village of Bouvignes a tale of blood and heroism is attached. In 1554 Henry II. of France seized the town and sacked it utterly. Three young married ladies of Crève-Cœur, after encouraging the garrison in its resistance, when all the men in the fortress and their husbands had been slain, hurled themselves from the tower before the advancing foe.

Just before arriving at Dinant, and before the last of the locks is reached, the pretty little brook Leffe flows into the Meuse. Here there is a large factory of merinos, from which as the steamer went by many workpeople were crowding out for their midday repast. I too was glad to descend from the boat, and having found refreshment, to ramble about and renew acquaintance with a town so well known to all who have visited the Ardennes.

The church close to the bridge is the first place to be visited. It dates from the thirteenth century, and

contains a font of the twelfth. Behind the high altar is another and more ancient one, dedicated to St Perpetuo, bishop of Tongres in the sixth century, who is buried on this spot. I did not ascend the 408 steps which lead from the vicinity of the church to the citadel, the way thither through the casino



DINANT.

grounds some distance farther on being far more gradual and accessible. The band was playing in the gardens as I passed through, and there were the usual groups of listeners seated round the tables sipping their coffee or bock on that sultry summer afternoon. I was soon joined by a small boy of

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twelve years old or thereabouts, who begged me to give him a cigarette. This I sternly refused, and asked the young rascal in return why he was not at school. He answered that he had not been there for some months, as he had lost the sight of both eyes for a time through an accident, and had become quite blind, though he had since recovered his sight. On further inquiry it turned out that the trouble had arisen from a chill incurred through his rushing off to inform an elder brother of his exemption from military service, and then sitting down in a heated condition in the bitter March wind; but an oculist had succeeded in restoring his eyesight, and he could now see almost as well as ever. By this time we had nearly reached the top of the hill on which the citadel is situated, and it was at this moment, I believe, that I threw away my cigar. In an instant the young rascal had picked it up, and soon was smoking away merrily in spite of my remonstrance. But a spark must have dropped unnoticed on the parched grass—but of this more anon. The small boy having been so far successful in his endeavour to obtain something from me soon left to join his companions.

The outlook over the town and river from the summit of the hill is certainly fine, and the position must have been an important one in earlier times. The present fortress was erected in 1818 by the Dutch on the site of a former stronghold, built by Everard de la Marck in 1523, and demolished by the

French in 1703. A still earlier building had been destroyed by the celebrated Charles the Bold when he sacked the town of Dinant in 1466.

Retracing my steps towards the grounds of the casino, I was accosted by a peasant, who asked me if I had seen a fire on the hill, as he had been told that the trees were burning in this direction. I replied in the negative, but arriving at the spot where I had previously thrown away my cigar, I was much surprised to find the ground and small tree-trunks charred for a distance of several yards. Undoubtedly there had been a blaze, and it was fortunate that greater damage had not been caused by my sufficiently thoughtless action.

I was annoyed to find that the handsome Kursaal with its pleasant concerts had become a thing of the past. The heavy tax on gambling establishments had resulted in the closing of a building which in other respects deserved support. Only rich towns such as Spa and Ostend are able to pay an enormous sum for the questionable privilege of attracting strangers to their Salle de Jeu. After a farewell glance at the famous Roche-à-Bayard, which recalls the memory of that marvellous quadruped, the magic steed of the four sons of Aymon, whose legends meet us so often in connection with the castles of the Ardennes, I took the train for Rochefort, in the beautiful valley of the Lesse.

On a previous visit to the Ardennes I had done



the twenty-five miles along the river on foot, and had found the walk by the banks of that charming river something to look back upon in after-years. First of all there is that picturesque old building, Château Walzin, once belonging to the fierce La Marcks, which rears itself sheer ~~above~~ the still dark water, evoking memories from the long-forgotten past. Then, too, there is Vive-Celles, with its symmetrical round towers, this time not connected with the La Marcks, but with the more recent but scarce less powerful family of Beaufort. These two families, La Marck and Beaufort, would appear to have held at different periods almost a monopoly of the strongholds in the Ardennes. The castles of Ardennes and Ciergnon both adorn the banks of the Lesse, as also do those of Villiers and Jamblines, recently purchased by King Leopold from the Count of Crunchy. The four together form one large property, well watered, and replete with different sorts of game and fish.

Of Eprave, the last village before reaching Rochefort, I have many pleasant recollections. There is a good inn there, and plenty of fishing for trout and grayling may be obtained in its two rivers, the Lomme and the Lesse. Not that the angler may expect to take large fish. The waters, unfortunately, are too much at the mercy of poachers, by whom I mean not merely the rustics who ply their stealthy craft after nightfall, but better-educated persons also, who deliberately by day, and without



CHÂTEAU DE WALZIN.

the least attempt at concealment, simply and solely for their own profit and pleasure, do their best to ruin these beautiful streams. Such are those connected with the hotels, who, if they wish to secure a dish of trout for their guests, do not hesitate to shoot or kill by any means, foul or fair, the fish of all sorts without the least discrimination. Such, too, are those who, calling themselves sportsmen, will return home with a dozen or so tiny fish of five or six inches in length or thereabouts, utterly indifferent to the fact that they are thereby putting an end to the hopes of better things in the future. Happily, in spite of these, there are good fish still left, more particularly grayling, and if the angler uses small enough flies he will have some sport both with that fish and with trout. A fine specimen, probably a sea-trout, was taken quite recently, in July 1899, just below the bridge at Eprave. It weighed 8 lb., as the angler informed me.

Several years ago, while spending some weeks at Eprave, I was spectator of an amusing scene between a peasant and a Belgian staying at the same hotel as myself. This gentleman was given to boasting about his own performances in the piscatory art; but although I was aware that he usually fished with a worm, I had up to then had no reason to suspect that the fine fish which he brought home were not always those of his own taking. One day, however, when I had had no sport with the fly, I came upon this person fishing in the stream

which joins the river a little above Villiers-sur-Lesse. He, too, had had no success, and was evidently anxious not to return home empty handed. While we were conversing a countryman approached and asked my companion if he wished to purchase a large eel? The latter at once assented, and the peasant conducted us to a place where a fine eel attached to a cord was disporting itself near the side of the stream. The Belgian eagerly seized the string, and having drawn the eel, which weighed nearly 3 lb., from the water, presented the man with 50 centimes, and made his way homewards. From the peasant's manner I felt sure that this was not the first time that he had received a coin for a similar service, but I was scarcely prepared for the sequel. We had nearly finished dinner the same evening when our friend slipped out on some pretext and returned in triumph with his day's booty. The eel was much admired, only the gentleman's wife seemed somewhat sceptical as to her husband's sincerity. "Did you catch that eel?" she said, addressing her better half. "Certainly," replied the latter unblushingly. Then turning to me, as if still in doubt, "Did you see it caught, monsieur, or was it taken with a silver hook?" Not wishing to give the man away, I replied that I had seen her husband take the fish out of the water, which was strictly true, although I must confess that I could not help feeling some contempt for a person who could stoop to so mean an artifice for the sake of

the trifling praise which he might gain thereby. But I do not cite this angler as a type of his fellow-countrymen, nor do I think that many Belgians would care to be suspected of so mean a transaction.

About this time the trial and acquittal of Captain Lothaire for the too summary execution of the missionary Stokes, on the charge of selling arms to the natives of the Congo State, was exciting much interest in Rochefort and the neighbourhood. Lothaire was a native of Rochefort, and received a hearty reception on his return to that town at the close of the trial. Amongst the visitors to Eprave was an officer invalided home from the Congo, an extremely kindly and agreeable man, who had at one period served under Lothaire as lieutenant. I remember having quite an argument, to put it in the mildest form, with this gentleman, upon the subject of Lothaire's acquittal, which appeared to me, as indeed it did to most Englishmen, an act of flagrant injustice. The officer, as no doubt was reasonable, supported the action of his chief, who, he maintained, had not exceeded his duty in putting the trader to death; but our animosity was allayed by some kindly words from the officer's wife, and we became and remained friends for the rest of our stay. That my opinion with regard to the absurd leniency shown by the judges in Lothaire's trial was not unfounded was sufficiently shown by the disapproval of the verdict not long after manifested by the King of the Belgians.



**ROCHEFORT.**

From a drawing by J. H. Wijsmuller.

The air round Eprave and Rochefort is extremely bracing and stimulating, more so than that of any other portion of Belgium with which I am acquainted. The town of Rochefort is much frequented by tourists, not only as a health-resort, but also because of its vicinity to the two grottoes of Rochefort and of Han.

The Han grotto is by far the finest in Belgium. It consists of a series of natural galleries about a mile in length perforated in the limestone rock, a quarter of a mile from the village of Han. To describe it, I may perhaps be allowed to quote from a description penned recently in the 'Guide to Belgium and Holland,' issued by Messrs Ward & Lock:—

In the spring or at other times when the river is too high, access to the grotto is difficult or impossible; the visit consequently should be made in the summer or autumn from July to October. For a portion of the grotto a boat is employed, by which one emerges from the cavern about half a mile from the town. The paths are sufficiently wide to enable one to inspect the grotto without fear of a wetting. The entrance is at the Trou Salpêtre. The effect as seen by the electric light is very charming. The four Salles, the Mysterieuses, discovered in 1857 and entitled the Portique, Mosquée, Merveilleuse, and Alhambra, with their beautiful clusters of stalactites, are among the best in the grotto. Arriving at the basin formed by the Lesse, where the river disappears in the inaccessible Styx, one enters the magnificent Salle du Dôme, 500 feet in length, 450 feet wide, and 180 feet in height. Above is the fountain known as

the Trône du Pluton, which when lit up by the guides in different directions, presents a very striking appearance. Some way down the slope is the Boudoir de Proserpine, with beautiful crystals formed by the drippings of the grotto. The Salle du Dôme owes its origin to the action of earthquakes, the last being that of 1828, which brought the rocks that strew the lower part of the Salle nearer the river. One embarks in the boat at the Passage du Diable, which also shows, by its great boulders of rock, traces of the earthquake of 1828. The distance traversed by water is about 200 yards. Near the exit is the Salle de Grande Fontaine, in which various iron implements, bearing witness to the presence of man in remote ages, have been discovered. As early as the sixteenth century the grotto was described by Berthels, abbot of Echternach, and during the last hundred years several volumes have dealt with this curious freak of nature.

From Rochefort I made some pleasant excursions, one of which, in the direction of Laroche, gave me the opportunity of taking a long walk over the hills as far as St Hubert. A tramway from Melreux station on the line to Liège, pursuing the pretty valley of the Ourthe, conveyed me towards Laroche, the capital of the Ardennes. A good-looking curé sat opposite me in the carriage, smoking a cigar; an agreeable change, no doubt, from the reading of the breviary, affected by so many ecclesiastics in Roman Catholic countries. It has sometimes struck me that the discipline of the Church is a trifle more lax in rural districts than in the towns, and although here as elsewhere the priest is usually devoted to



his charge, there are in this, as in other professions, men of varied moods and tempers, and sometimes,



LAROCHE.

From a drawing by J. H. Wijsmuller.

if common report speak true, black sheep are to be found among the flock! Not that I would for a moment imply that the gentleman before me was

one of the latter class. He was probably merely a man on whom the duties of his small cure sat lightly, as they do on so many of his fraternity in England, in the country districts and elsewhere. At any rate, he seemed popular with those who entered in and out of the carriage, and chatted familiarly with the bystanders whenever the train stopped at one of the little wayside stations.

There was not much to notice in his companions: one of them, I remember, was a postman, with a forked, iron-shod stick, useful for the twofold purpose of climbing hills and defending himself in case of attack. The stick is far from unnecessary, as although the inhabitants are as a rule inoffensive, and the Ardennes are not dangerous in the same sense as the outlying districts of other countries, such as Italy and Spain or even France are said to be, yet as these rural postmen frequently carry with them comparatively large sums of money, an unarmed man might find himself in an awkward predicament if suddenly attacked in the solitude of the woods and hills. Nor was there much to remark in the 18 kilometres of scenery through which we passed, beyond the constantly changing beauties of the river, now winding slowly through low wood-clad hills, or dashing swiftly through deep gorges with the rapidity of the Usk below Brecon, or the upper course of the Herefordshire Wye. Midway the lofty hill of Montaigu raises its crest above us, crowned with the famous hermitage of St Thibault, a very

real personage to the simple peasant of the Ardennes, by whom he is invoked in all kinds of sickness, and as the bestower of the Mal de St Thibault, a comfortable disease, in which the patient "drinks well and eats tolerably."

Of Laroche itself it is easy to speak; it is probably the most overrated place in the whole of the Ardennes. The ruins of the castle are fine and merit a great deal of attention, and the country around is undeniably beautiful; but to compare the town itself with at least a dozen other localities in the Ardennes can be done only to the disparagement of Laroche. Its narrow and confined streets, squalid houses, and generally dirty appearance are quite in keeping with the reputation which it has gained for unhealthiness, and do not suggest it as an agreeable spot for a prolonged summer residence; while in winter the extreme cold and dulness would prove too much for any but an ardent devotee of sport. Of this he would find plenty, in the shape of the deer and boars which frequent the adjoining forests. The castle, although a mere ruin, will quite repay a visit, and the facetious guide whose task it is to dilate upon its former glories is quite a character in himself. The building goes back to the eleventh century, if not, as some think, beyond.

After passing successively through the hands of the Counts of Laroche, the Counts of Luxembourg, and the French—who, by the way, destroyed a portion in order to make the subterranean passages



**LAROCHE.**

From a drawing by J. H. Wijsmuller.

which still exist—the castle was sold in 1852 for the trifling sum of £40, and turned into a kind of allotment garden.

Seventeen miles separate Laroche from St Hubert, and as the day was comparatively cool, I decided to cover the ground on foot instead of availing myself of a bicycle or other assistance. Looking back on ascending the hill towards St Hubert, I remarked the castle standing out in the distance, with some not very picturesque modern villas in the background. Dark woods clothed the hills to the left, while here and there were patches of corn waiting for the reaper's sickle. Presently I passed an old man breaking stones beneath a screen put up to shelter him from the sun. I paused for a while and asked him how many heaps he got through in the course of a day's work? "Two," was the reply: he further stated that he was paid 1 franc per heap, a not very lordly income—12 francs a-week, but still quite enough to maintain a single man in the Ardennes. In this instance the man was a cripple, having met with an accident which incapacitated him from moving about much. Still with the courage which characterises many such he worked on, preferring to gain a livelihood for himself rather than to be a burden to others.

Arrived at the summit of the long hill which leads to the plateau between Laroche and St Hubert, I soon reached Beausaint Church, a modern building, as the date outside informed me. Farther on an

old woman vigorously chopping wood in front of her cottage attracted my attention. On my remarking how strong she must be to do such work with so much energy, she replied, "Years ago I was as strong as a man," a statement not difficult to credit, but that now at sixty-one it was hard work. The wood which she bought for winter consumption was rather dear, costing about 5 francs the cartload. As most of the cottages about here seemed to be built of mud and thatched with straw, I could readily believe the inmates when they informed me that it was terribly cold in winter, which strikes heavily on these wooded uplands. There were, however, many cottages of more substantial framework.

Before arriving at Champlon the road led through extensive beech-woods, the home of the wild stag and boar, as the peasants told me. There was plenty of evidence of this in the little inn at Champlon, which was decorated with many trophies of the chase, and pictures indicative of hunting scenes. Here in winter came many chasseurs, so the hostess informed me, when the snow was on the ground; for this is of great assistance in enabling the beaters to trace the boar or deer, and to locate them before the arrival of the sportsmen themselves. There was one picture which caused me no little amusement. It consisted of a representation of all the popes, 263 in number, beginning at St Peter and ending with Leo XIII. The expression of the latter, as if

half pleased and half amazed to find himself in so motley an assembly—for, as we know, some of his predecessors were beings of a very strange order—struck me as not a little quaint.

Making my way onwards through the woods, with here and there an opening affording extensive prospects with herds of cows and goats at pasture in the glades, or again with reapers at work amongst the little patches of corn, the smoke rising in places where the underwood has been fired to promote the growth of a future crop, I reach at length a small café, outside of which stand two or three carts laden with timber, the staple product of the forest. Entering into conversation with the drivers, I learn something about their calling: 3 or 4 francs a-day appears to be their average daily wage, in winter rather less; but men with a trade such as masons can earn as much as 5 francs a-day even in this out-of-the-way district. Presently the door opens and there enters a magnificent man, some six feet two or more in height, though evidently getting on in years. The offer of a glass of *pecqué*, the gin which is the favourite drink of this part of the Ardennes, soon breaks the ice.

"There are not many men like you in this part of the country?" I observed.

"No," he answered, "I am taller than most of my neighbours, but I stoop now."

"You seem to like your *pecqué* very much. I should have thought it rather unwholesome for you?"

"Yes, it is; it gives one no strength, but it is the

drink of the country, and we all drink a great deal of it here."

"About how much do you drink a-day—ten glasses, I suppose?"

"No, twenty more likely. You see these small glasses only cost 5 centimes each, and you can get twenty for 1 franc if you wish," and so on, the old man evidently thinking it a mistaken habit, but one worthy to be observed notwithstanding.

Close to St Hubert the hill begins to descend rapidly; a light cart drawn by a dog and driven by a boy rushes down at breakneck speed. Not being a London policeman, accustomed to gauge the pace of the scorching cyclist, I cannot pretend to define the exact rate of progress, but I should be inclined to place it at between fourteen and sixteen miles an hour at least. Whatever the pace may have been, I should have been sorry to have changed places with the boy, if the quadruped had been less sure-footed than he appeared to be.

With regard to the Abbey of St Hubert, I will once more quote what I have already written elsewhere:—

St Hubert is a small place of about 2500 inhabitants, and beyond its celebrated abbey church presents but little attraction to the visitor. The church is built in the Gothic style of the fourteenth century, but is spoilt by a Renaissance front of the year 1700. It contains double arches vaulted throughout, and below the choir is a small crypt, supported by six pillars. In the first chapel to the left is St Hubert's tomb, a marble sarcophagus, surmounted by



bas-reliefs, with statuettes at the four corners, of Saints Lambert, Aubin, Amand, and Bérégise, above which is a statue by the celebrated Geefs, the gift of the first Leopold. The church was built between 1526 and 1576 by the abbots Malaise and Remacle. The first abbey dated from the seventh century and belonged to the monastery founded, according to tradition, by Plectruda, wife of Pépin de Herstal. In the twelfth century a second church was built by the monks, the present structure being consequently the third. In 1568 some Calvinists of Condé's army pillaged and burnt the abbey, destroying the front, which was replaced by the present structure.

St Hubert is a great place for pilgrimages, and miraculous cures are said to be wrought by the saint's stole, especially in cases of hydrophobia. The legend of St Hubert is somewhat as follows: St Hubert was a rich noble at the court of King Pépin, so fond of the chase that he neglected everything else. One Good Friday, as he was hunting in the forest, he saw a stag bearing between its antlers a golden crucifix. He rode in the direction of the animal, which refused to move. At the same moment a voice warned the huntsman to desist from his sinful courses. This Hubert did, and entering the monastery at Stavelot, became in due time Bishop of Tongres. The famous stole, which is said to cure hydrophobia, was reported to have been brought to Hubert by an angel at the time of his consecration.

The earliest name of the place where the abbey and town now stand was Andage, and it was here that Hubert loved to come on visits to his friend St Berengius. After his death St Hubert was buried at Liège; but his body being claimed by the monks of Andage, the Bishop of Liège, in 825 A.D., granted their request, and the relics were brought to that town. It was then that the wonderful stole, taken from the tomb,



SAINT HUBERT.

From a painting by H. Doulenger.

began to work the miracles which have attracted so many pilgrims to St Hubert's shrine.

The conversion of the saint is said to have taken place in the woods of Champlon, a few miles to the north-east, on the road to Laroche. A farm on the spot, where once a chapel stood, is still called the *Converserie*. In the Middle Ages the abbey possessed forty villages and a large revenue. It underwent several calamities, culminating in the destruction of its bells during the French Revolution, when the abbey itself was put up for auction, the price being nearly 2 million francs (£80,000). The church, however, was repurchased by the public-spirited Bishop of Namur and other dignitaries for the comparatively small sum of £1360. The monastery which adjoins the church has now become St Hubert's Reformatory, where some 400 or 500 children, not necessarily all criminals, receive religious instruction and are taught a suitable trade. There are excellent workshops, and the farms round the monastery afford plenty of opportunity for practical training in agriculture.

If Laroche is overrated, I cannot but express my opinion that too little justice has been done to St Hubert. My advice to those who would decide between the merits of the two places is to see both if possible on the same day, and then to make their decision accordingly.

From Rochefort I made another journey to Barvaux and Durbuy. At the former place there is little to interest one beyond the fact of its being a pleasant village situated on a bend of the Ourthe; but its inn, the *Aigle Noire*, is one of the best in the Ardennes,

and would no doubt be a comfortable spot to while away a week or so. From there to Durbuy is but a short distance by diligence. I found the driver most communicative; but although he had driven the coach for more than a year, he did not appear to know the name of the ruined tower, the "Tour du Diable," which stood full in his view upon an adjacent hill. Nor, after all, does any importance attach itself to the structure; for in spite of its somewhat mysterious name and ancient appearance, it is not an object of any antiquity.

The Celtic dolmens at Wéris, a little beyond, however, have a real claim upon the attention of the antiquary. The largest of them, recently purchased by the government, rests upon five supporting stones, and is protected from injury by an enclosure.

Durbuy is quite one of the show places in the Ardennes, not only on account of its position in the valley of the Ourthe, which is here extremely beautiful, but owing to the interest attaching to its picturesque castle, which, wrecked by the relentless Louis XIV. in 1688, has lately undergone a complete restoration. Formerly it belonged to the all-powerful La Marcks, but afterwards it came into the hands of its present possessors, the Comtes d'Ursel. The old bridge beyond the tiny church is said to be the only bridge of stone which existed upon the Ourthe at the beginning of this century. I remarked that the church clock had stopped, in accordance with

the sleepy old-world air which seemed to permeate the tranquil little place.

The old chateau of Beauraing, on the branch line from Houyet, in the Lesse valley, was the next on the list of places to be visited. There had been a great fête in the park on the day previous: feats of arms, wrestling and boxing, had attracted competitors from all parts of Belgium, and indeed from France. The streets were gay with a lavish display of bunting, while "Honour to the brave combatants" was the device above the triumphal arch that met my eyes on entering the park adjoining the chateau. Making my way into the private grounds, I could observe no one who was likely to show me over the ruins, and deeming it expedient therefore to be my own guide, I endeavoured to survey by myself the remains of their past glory.

This beautiful building was destroyed by a fire in 1889—not the first disaster of that kind from which it had suffered. It was here that Count Egmont, a former owner of the castle, plotted the conspiracy which caused his ruin. Later on, Beauraing came into the possession of the Beaufort-Spontin family. Two large round towers which have survived all the misfortunes of the place may be seen to the east of the ruins. The splendid art collection and the rest of the building, visited by the Prince of Wales in 1871, have disappeared, although a portion of the stables and hothouses still remain. Near the latter are the ruins of the "Madman's Tower," in which,

it is said, a Beaufort accused of treason died insane. One of the two large towers, which date from the time of Charles V., bears the following inscription :—

In the year 1552, while the Emperor Charles V. and the King of France, Henry II., were at war, and after the capture of the city of Metz, Charles, Baron of Berlaymont, Leurs, Hierges, Lord of Perwez, Beauraing, Hauteroche, captain of fifty men-at-arms, and treasurer of the said Emperor, and Adrienne de Ligne, daughter of the baron of Barbanson, his very dear companion and wife, for perpetual memory, had this tower built, that may God always keep under His holy charge.

A pleasant garden full of varied flowers adjoins the ruins, and in a neat aviary hard by a company of doves were filling the air with their melodious cooing.

Leaving the ivy-covered ruins in their calm decay, I rambled through the private portion of the park beyond. Here all was quiet, and but for a distant murmur from the tower or the occasional yelping of a dog, one might have imagined oneself far from habitation of any kind. A large and curious cannon, pointing down one of the avenues, seemed to go back at least three centuries beyond our date, and had doubtless seen service in troublous times.

Having to change trains at Houyet on my way back, I found that sufficient time remained for me to climb the hill leading to the castle of the Ardennes, which, since my last visit, had been turned into a kind of hotel for summer residence. Only those with

long purses are recommended to avail themselves of its advantages; but the lovely views over the Lesse valley, and the enjoyment of shooting and fishing and other amusements, should do much to mitigate any soreness which one might well feel at the length of the bill.

But the Lesse, although its charms had often drawn me as an angler to its side, was powerless to detain me any longer on the present occasion; there were other rivers, the Ourthe and the Amblève, for example, which in point of scenery held out attractions equal to those of the fascinating Lesse.

Leaving Rochefort, therefore, with its comfortable but crowded hotel—how Monsieur Biron is able to accommodate so many guests to the satisfaction of all is to me a matter of wonder—I took up my residence at the little inn adjoining the bridge at Esneux on the Ourthe. With this I was quite content, as the diet was good and the Belgians *en villégiature* there were for the most part agreeable and polite. Here, as elsewhere, I met with people who informed me of their anxiety that their children should learn English; most of them had at one time or another been inconvenienced by their own ignorance of the language, and desired that their children should be put in the way of acquiring a competent knowledge of our tongue as soon as possible. Much attention is being devoted to this subject in Belgium, and it will be clear, I think, from what is said in the chapter on education, that good provision is

now made throughout the kingdom for proper instruction in English and other languages.

Looking over the bridge on the evening of my arrival, the harvest moon above showing the outlines of the surrounding hills silhouetted clear against the sky, the water lapping lazily the arches of the bridge beneath, I could not help recalling Scott's description of Tours in 'Quentin Durward,' a description which sent me years ago on a fruitless journey to that city. Now Scott had never been at Tours—as a matter of fact he had never been farther south than the Seine, as he records elsewhere—or he would never have depicted that beautiful but overwrought picture of the town on the Loire; but what he applies to Tours might with some truth be said of Esneux, which affords by moonlight a scene of extreme and tranquil loveliness. The little hotel Bellevue, at one end of the bridge, perfectly embowered with flowers, is quite the place for romantic lovers to while away the blissful hours of the "lune de miel." Possibly in July or August it would be hardly quiet enough to suit their tastes, but in May or June it would be everything that could be desired.

I shall not easily forget one of the outings which I made from Esneux. Quitting the train at the little station of Sy, some miles beyond Hamoir, I made my way along the river-bank in the direction of the farm of Palogne, and the ruins of the ancient castle of Logne. Nature as depicted in the valley of the



Ourthe is here seen in her most fascinating and alluring form. An artist might do worse than take the hint, for a more charming piece of river scenery I have rarely witnessed. The day was warm and calm, and no sound broke the silence of the glen. The large chub rolled lazily over beneath the bushes which fringed the edge of the stream, while butterflies of different hues flitted here and there in the bright sunshine. After walking some twenty minutes, I reached the ferry, which must be crossed if the ruins are to be viewed. At the farm I obtained a meal, and chatted amicably to two or three people who were spending their holidays in that spot. There was not much to do, they said, but to walk about and catch what fish they could in the too clear waters of the Ourthe. Trout there were, and barbel, but not many trout.

A small boy having volunteered his services as a guide, I ascended the somewhat precipitous path-way through the woods which brought us at length to the crest of the hill, crowned by the ruins of the old castle of Logne. Once an appanage of the abbey of Stavelot, the chateau passed in the fifteenth century into the hands of the rapacious and blood-thirsty La Marcks. At length, in 1521, this nest of bandits was rooted out in summary fashion by Henry of Nassau. Planting twelve cannon on the heights of Herbet, and eight on those of Vieuxville, he brought the whole weight of his artillery to bear upon the beleaguered robbers. Forced to surren-

der, they met with little mercy, and were hanged from the battlements.

There is an opening on the side of the hill, somewhat difficult of access, which leads to a kind of grotto containing stalactites. This the guide was very anxious to show me; but on my asking him whether it resembled the grotto of Han, he was naturally compelled to answer in the negative, whereupon I told him that he might blow out his candle, and contented myself with investigating the Cave Notre Dame, another cavern which served as a refuge during the French Revolution to certain priests who had failed to take the oath of allegiance to the Republic.

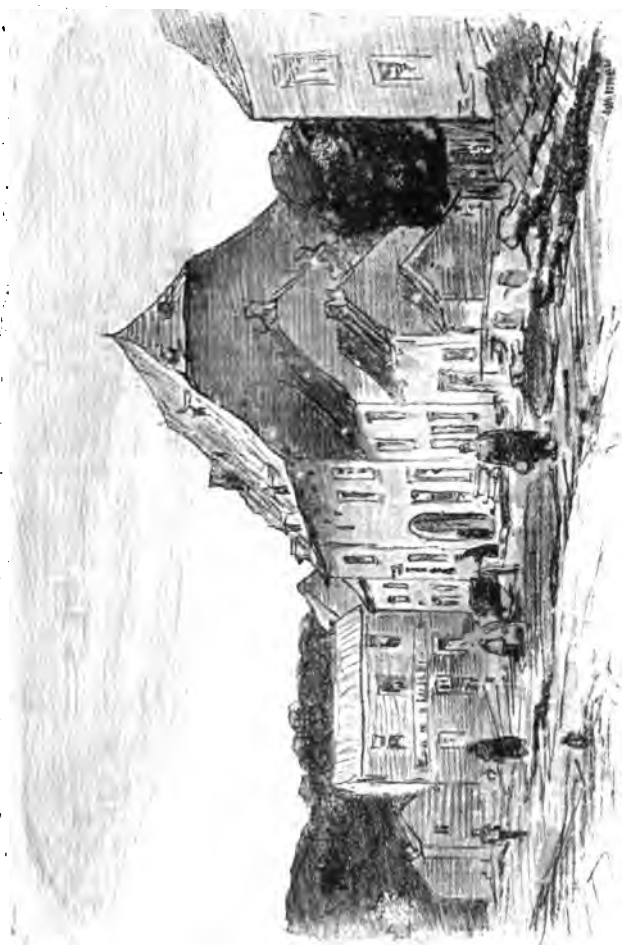
Returning on foot through Sy, with its tiny church, and past the station—where, by the way, the master, or rather the mistress, to use an Irishism, is a woman—another beautiful view presented itself—fine white cliffs crowned with brushwood, towering above the limpid waters of the Ourthe.

Following the windings of the stream, I found myself at another ferry, close to the fine chateau of Hamoir-Lassus, or Upper Hamoir, the Lassus being a contraction for là-dessus. Of Hamoir itself, a rather large village, there is little to be noted; but farther on two very handsome chateaux—the one white, with round towers, and the other of red brick—attract the eye. The river winds in a graceful curve, so that a glimpse is obtained of the village of Fairon, about a mile beyond. Thither I took the

short cut over the hill, where the reapers were busy with the harvest, which here, as in other parts of Belgium that season, appeared to be more than satisfactory. A curious stone half hidden by the shrubs lay on the ground near the path. It bore an inscription almost entirely obliterated, and seemed to have formed at one time a portion of some ecclesiastical monument. How long, I wonder, will it remain in its present position before some one carries it off to swell the already well-stocked collection of antiquities at Liége or Namur!

Beyond Fairon are the two Comblains, Comblain-la-Tour and Comblain-au-Pont, both of them favourite places for a summer stay. They are about two and a half miles apart, on a road somewhat disfigured by stone quarries. Blasting is constantly going on, and it is interesting to watch the little clusters of men, high above one's head, clinging like flies to the side of the cliff, while the trollies ascend or descend with amazing rapidity. Little, indeed, is wasted in this busy land; untiring labour is ever finding fresh fields for development. As far as I was able to ascertain from the men themselves, about 4 francs a-day is the usual wage of a quarryman in this district. At Comblain-au-Pont there existed formerly a bridge which gave its name to the place. It was destroyed by the French in the last century, but its remains may be still observed by the river.

Comblain struck me as a somewhat dirty spot,



COMBLAIN.

From a drawing by J. H. Wijsmuller.

but in a measure the beauty of the Ourthe compensates for this drawback. Nor do I think that visitors need be anxious on the score of personal cleanliness, for the river below the town seemed to be much appreciated by bathers, as well as by the anglers, who were rather hopelessly plying their craft in the all too transparent waters. Perhaps "hopeless" is not quite the word to employ, for in the breast of no one does hope seem to spring so eternal as in that of the Belgian fisherman.

Three miles beyond Comblain-au-Pont is Poulseur, the square-built tower of its ancient castle dominating the village now, even as it did many centuries ago in Charlemagne's time. Opposite at one time stood the equally famous castle of Montfort, the remains of which have been destroyed by the stone-quarries. At Montfort lived the Four Sons of Aymon, who successfully held the castle for a time against the troops of Charlemagne. Thither the great Emperor at length proceeded, together with all the forces of his French nobility. With the object of taking the fortress he built the massive tower which one notices above the town. After a siege of three months, in which great valour was shown by both sides—Renaud, mounted on the marvellous steed Bayard, putting 200 of the assailants to flight—the castle was set on fire, and the Sons of Aymon at the head of the garrison escaped by cutting their way through the middle of the enemy.

The river below the town, with its pretty weir, at which several anglers had taken up their position, would have furnished a worthy subject for a painter, and I would have lingered longer regarding the quiet scene but that the day was waning and the approach of evening warned me to hasten on, trusting that I might be in time for supper at the *table d'hôte* of my hotel.

Close to Esneux I passed a lovely villa, well designated the Villa of Roses, a charming spot, and probably the peaceful country abode of some rich citizen of Liége. Near it was a pretty fountain, with the equally graceful invitation to the wayfarer, "Refresh thyself and thank Heaven."

In the evening I listened for a time to the music of a band of some thirty or forty performers, who were playing in one of the streets of the small town. I learnt that the band was assisted by subscription, and that the performers were nearly all of them workmen belonging to the neighbourhood. In the winter they played indoors in a building lent to them for the purpose. Surely more might be done in this way in England to enliven that dulness inherent to our villages, which is without doubt one of the chief causes of the immigration of the rural population into the larger towns, to the detriment of the country districts generally. It is all very well for theorists to write long articles bewailing the decadence of the agricultural labourer, and the gradual depopulation of some of our counties. The remedy is not so far to seek,

after all. Let local organisations or private individuals take a hint from their German, French, or Belgian neighbours, and endeavour within their own sphere of influence to combat the monotony of the rustic's daily life, and at least a step will have been made towards the solution of one of the most perplexing problems of the day.

A climb to the plateau of Hamay and the height called Beaumont was amply repaid by the delightful views which they commanded of the town and of the valley of the Ourthe. A convalescent home, supported by the generosity of the Montefiore family, gives evidence that the poor are not forgotten by the wealthy in this part of Belgium. Nor is this attractive spot unknown to history, for it was here that Jourdan defeated the Austrian army in 1794 and caused the latter to evacuate the territory.

Tilff, a few miles above Esneux on a broader portion of the Ourthe, is another agreeable place of residence, and it is hard to believe that at it one is only the short distance of some six miles from the populous and commercial city of Liège, and close to the zinc-works of the Vieille-Montagne Company. As I lingered on the bridge, idly contemplating an angler beneath who was fishing with two rods from a punt, I was surprised, as was possibly the angler himself, to see his patience rewarded by a moderate-sized fish. I mention this, for of the many anglers whom I watched during that summer in Belgium no other was successful while I was

looking on. Doubtless they enjoy better sport when the water is less clear: the landlord of the Hôtel de Pont at Esneux, indeed, informed me that 'some years ago, while trolling for pike, he captured a salmon-trout of 15 lb. in weight. Nor do I doubt this statement, for, given fair play, these rivers should hold fish in fair numbers and of good weight; but fair play, as I have remarked before, is at a discount: poaching is rife; even the pike, that shark of fresh water, is preserved, while the law respecting angling is formed, not so much in the interests of the sportsman as for the sake of the pot-hunter. For example, trout of seven inches may be legally captured, while for perch and other coarse fish the limit of length is placed as low as five. The laws, too, relating to the close season are certainly bewildering and inexplicable; thus it is perfectly lawful to fish on Sundays and holidays during close-time. Surely it would be more reasonable to accord extra protection to the fish on those days on which the greatest numbers of anglers resort to the river-side!

The prices of the angling licences, which are obtainable at the post-offices, are regulated by law. For 10 francs one is permitted to fish in any fashion which the law allows. For 4 francs you may catch a fish with a line, or shoot it, should you think proper, with a rifle. On payment of 1 franc one may use a rod on Sundays and holidays, and the same privilege is accorded for other days



as well on payment of twice that sum. Those who contravene the regulations prescribed by law are punished by the forfeiture of their licence for two or three years, according to the enormity of the offence. The penalty for fishing without a licence is fixed at a fine of from 26 to 100 francs.

As will be observed, therefore, it is highly expedient for the stranger fishing in Belgium to carry a copy of the law in his pocket, as otherwise he is tolerably certain to transgress unwittingly.

That beautiful stream the Amblève, which joins the Ourthe at Rivage, some miles above Esneux, was the next to claim my attention. Leaving the train at Rivage, I decided to walk up-stream as far as Remouchamps, trusting that the scenery would compensate me for the trouble of undertaking the journey on so warm a day. Nor was I disappointed. The Amblève, if not so fine a stream as the Ourthe, possesses, nevertheless, a quiet beauty of its own, and there are several places of interest upon its banks. I had not proceeded far upon the road between Rivage and Remouchamps when I overtook a young peasant carrying a scythe, making his way in the direction of the corn-fields. I conversed with him for a while, and learnt from him that the wages in this neighbourhood were not very high, his own being  $1\frac{1}{2}$  franc a-day, with food.

Passing the rocks of Halleux, which tower above the wayside, I noticed a peasant in a kind of shed close by. On my inquiring his occupation, he in-

formed me that his duty was to remove such rocks or stones as were in danger of falling upon the road below. Such an occurrence seemed only too probable, but one would have thought that in so thinly populated a district the precaution of paying a man for work of this kind was almost unnecessary, the more so since that portion of the road which is overhung by the projecting rock is of comparatively small extent. At any rate, it was an extremely easy job for an able-bodied man, such as this peasant appeared to be.

Just opposite to the shed of which I have spoken, some large fish were swimming about in a deep pool close to the bank. These the peasant said were *hoteux*, a singular species of coarse fish of which I had previously observed specimens in the Lesse. They are of no value for food, and are little better from a sporting point of view, since they never rise to the fly, and do not appear to possess any of the fighting qualities of several other coarse fish. I learnt, however, that there were good trout in this portion of the Amblève, which appeared to me to be well adapted for fly-fishing; the scenery certainly left little to be desired. It is true that there are occasional quarries, but as these are not so conspicuous as those about Comblain, the general effect of the landscape is practically unimpaired.

About three and a half miles from Rivage the little village of Martin-Rive with its pretty houses shows itself on the opposite bank. On the height

above a bend of the river rise the ruins of the castle of the Amblève, one of the oldest of those remaining in the Ardennes. One tradition points it out as the birthplace of the legendary Four Sons of Aymon, while another indicates it as the prison of the son of Charles Martel. In the fifteenth century it came into the possession of the rapacious La Marcks. Later on, the inhabitants of Sprimont, evincing a natural dislike to this nest of robbers in their neighbourhood, obtained permission to purchase the castle from the La Marcks, and to restore it to its suzerain the Duke of Limbourg.

After this, the building seems to have been permitted to fall into its present state of decay. The ruins are not very striking, nevertheless there is an air of grandeur attaching to a spot suggestive of so much mythical and historical renown. As I passed in front of the ancient ruin there was a buzz and a whirr and a sound of wheels, and a petroleum-tricycle with a little carriage attached, in which a lady was seated, rushed past, raising a cloud of dust in its mad career. It was a sight to make grim William de la Marck stare with wonder, if his spirit could behold this latest creation of our age. Within a bowshot of his towers are some marble and granite works; the engine was humming merrily beneath the castle, another striking illustration of the remorseless march of time.

A beautiful modern chateau appears a little beyond Martin-Rive, and farther on the river flows over

the rocks in an attractive waterfall. Aywaille, the next village, is one of the most favoured resorts for visitors in this part of the Ardennes. Its hotels are fairly good, and I was surprised to find streets lighted by electricity in so comparatively primitive a spot.

The walk to Remouchamps by the pathway beyond the bridge, beneath the high bare cliffs, was a welcome change from the dusty, though otherwise pleasant, road. It soon brought me to Sougnez, said to be the home of the Segni, of whom Cæsar speaks in the sixth book of his Commentaries. The adjoining rocks have a later history, for they were scaled during the battle of September 18, 1794, by the volunteers of the army of the Moselle. Remouchamps itself is charming. Like Han and Rochefort, it boasts of a grotto, or rather of a cavern consisting of three grottoes, one of which is more than 300 yards long. But to my mind the chief attraction of Remouchamps is the park and castle of Mont-jardin, which rises among the trees, sheer above the foaming water, in form and position not at all unlike Château Walzin. Part of the building is modern; the older portion, which dates from the fifteenth century, was restored after a fire in the seventeenth. But all is in excellent taste, and its owner, the Comte de Theux, may well be proud of his ancestral domain.

With the Hôtel de Luxembourg at Aywaille as my headquarters for a few days, I made a short

excursion to Harzé, formerly, like so many elsewhere, an old chateau of the La Marcks, but afterwards restored in the style of the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. An old legend of the place relates that a former owner, a miser, died here of hunger in the midst of his gold. He had forgotten how to open the door of his secret treasure-house.

Another day I employed in visiting Stavelot, a fair-sized and attractive town on the banks of the Amblève. One feature of the place that struck me as rather singular was the appearance of the gardens of the townspeople, which, instead of adjoining the houses, are situated apart in the outskirts, somewhat after the fashion of allotments in England. The place is noted for its tanneries, but to an outsider the hospice and the churches are more interesting. The foundation of the abbey is attributed by legend to St Remacle, Bishop of Liége, the possessor of a wonderful ass, which conveyed the stones for the building. Satan is represented as having assumed the form of a wolf, which devoured the ass, whereupon the good saint made the wolf carry the stones instead, and when Satan arrived with the load, uttered the words "Sta, leu"—*i.e.*, "Stand, wolf"—whence the name of Stavelot. St Remacle died in A.D. 666. In the eleventh century the abbey church was built. Of this a tower and the porch still exist: the other buildings, including the abbots' palace, rebuilt in the last century, are now the Hospice Ferdinand Nicolai.

The parish church includes among its ornaments the Chasse de St Remacle, a beautiful enamelled and bejewelled reliquary of the thirteenth century, and also that of St Poppo, the builder of the abbey church. The latter was almost entirely destroyed at the Revolution, the last of the prince abbots of Stavelot dying about the same period, in 1794. The Hospice Ferdinand Nicolai, a stone building, which includes portions of the abbey, is particularly handsome.

Two fountains, the one in the main street and the other in the market-place, appeared to me worthy of notice; and there is much to excite attention in the town, which, being apparently healthy as well as picturesque, should prove an agreeable place for a prolonged stay. I found plenty to amuse me in the entries in the visitors' book at the Hôtel d'Orange, a comfortable hostelry and quite the best in Stavelot. As a rule, these entries are of a serious nature, and are supposed to be under the supervision of the police. The traveller is requested to write his name, profession, the place of his birth and that of residence, as well as the locality from which he has just arrived; he may also state his age, but this is optional; and I notice that although men usually indicate the number of their years, ladies are seldom equally communicative.

Three or four persons, however, in making their entries in this particular book, seem to have taken the matter less seriously than is wont to be the

case. One Belgian designates himself as a "dog-seller," another as a "traveller in hot water," while a third endeavours to pose as an "anarchist." Two Englishmen describe themselves as millionaires, forgetting that the time is gone when all Englishmen travelling on the Continent were supposed to be rolling in wealth. Cook's excursions and cheap fares have brought about a wonderful change in this respect, and not altogether for the better. One rather singular feature in these excursions is the curious idea which seems to possess some of our countrymen, that Belgium being a country in which living is avowedly cheap, it is their duty to beat the inhabitants down to the lowest point in all matters of price. Of course I refer not to such places as Ostend and Spa, where the hotel proprietors are only too well able to protect themselves, but to the ordinary country hotel, at which the Englishman is usually confronted with a bill of very moderate dimensions as compared with that which would greet him in a similar establishment at home. In the improbable event of his being charged on a higher scale than the Belgian visitor, a quiet remonstrance with the landlord will produce a speedy relaxation of the tariff in his favour.

So, too, in the matter of engaging servants. I have heard of English people with ample means at their disposal who apparently imagined that high-class Belgian servants should be content with wages at which their own scullery-maid in England would



CHÂTEAU DE LA ROCHE.



have turned up her nose in scorn; but I may add that a succession of very indifferent domestics soon dispelled this notion, and induced them to offer wages on a more liberal scale.

Pursuing my journey by rail from Stavelot to Coö, I was enabled to view the pretty but artificial cataract for which the little village is famous. It owes its origin to Jacques Hubin, abbot of Stavelot, who died in 1787. Although not a Niagara, the spectacle of the Amblève precipitating itself from a height over the rocks is sufficiently striking to please and attract a large number of visitors.

There has been some talk recently of utilising the water-power for paper-mills, but I believe that, owing to the energetic opposition of the local authorities, the plan has fallen through, and we may hope that the little village will not be deprived in consequence of its principal attraction. Praiseworthy efforts have been made in Belgium within the last twenty years to preserve the natural beauties of the country from vandalism and decay. Two leagues—the National and the Namur Societies—for the protection of sites have done much to forward this object, and it is to be hoped that their influence will become widely extended throughout the kingdom. It would be a thousand pities if beautiful places, as Coö, Remouchamps, Esneux, and Durbuy, for example, were to become vulgarised by the erection of hideous structures, such as those which have impaired the beauty of Laroche.

The road through Roanne-Coo to La Gleize, where I proposed to take the train once more, runs at some distance from the river. La Gleize is charmingly situated at the confluence of the Amblève and the Roannay, a pretty brook, with an equally graceful name, which descends through wooded hills from the direction of Francorchamps.

Having some time to wait at La Gleize before the arrival of the train, I interested myself in observing the notices posted up in the little waiting-room. These were mainly of a utilitarian character. For example, there was a placard relating to the Practical School of Agriculture at Huy, established under the patronage of the Minister of Agriculture, while another notice referred to homes at Brussels for workmen seeking employment, a similar advantage being offered to domestic servants. There was also a paper reminding those who had suffered injury through accident that the king, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession, had set aside two millions of francs, of which the interest would be devoted to the relief of their necessities.

The railway between La Gleize and Remouchamps affords a good view of the Fonds de Quareux, where the river rushes along for a considerable distance through the innumerable boulders with which its bed is strewn. Before I left Aywaille I was careful to inspect the really admirable collection of animals and birds from the Ardennes which finds its home

in the large café opposite the railway-station. These are excellently stuffed, and among them are to be noticed the stag, wild boar, badger, otter, marten, and other Belgian fauna. The birds, too, are most interesting. Several specimens of that magnificent bird, the eagle owl, which is every year becoming rarer in the Ardennes, are among the trophies here displayed.

From Aywaille to Bouillon on the Semois is a far cry, but the time at my disposal was limited, and I wished to see the famous ruins of the great frontier fortress before returning to Brussels. I traversed *en route* the line between Aye and Marche, destined that very evening to be the scene of a dastardly attempt to wreck the Orient Express from Arlon, which carries in the direction of Ostend sums of money amounting to millions of francs. That the attempt was happily frustrated, and that great loss of life was thereby prevented, appeared from the accounts given by the newspapers on the following day to have been due to chance; but it seems probable that the police had some inkling of the impending disaster. It is difficult to explain otherwise the presence at midnight of three or four mounted gendarmes in the woods in so secluded a locality.

The country as seen from the railway, as far as Libremont, is extremely pleasing, the valley of the Lomme, one of the tributaries of the Lesse, being exceedingly pretty, especially between Jemelle and Poix, although the scenery is wanting in that wild-

ness of character which belongs to many portions of the Ardennes.

The Lomme, as well as another stream, the Wamme, takes its rise in the forest of St Hubert, and both rivers possess, in common with some of our own streams, such as the Mole in Surrey and the Manifold in Derbyshire, the singular property of disappearing during a portion of their course, only to reappear later on, even larger than before. This is due to the nature of the soil traversed, and is a peculiarity which exists in districts where a limestone formation is found.

Close to Grupont one cannot fail to remark the handsome and picturesque castle of Mirwart, rising with five towers from a lofty crag above the stream, recalling, as it does, its ancient proprietors, the mighty race of De la Marck. The chateau was twice destroyed, but Adolphe of that name rebuilt it, and gave to the building the striking appearance which it still presents.

At length after a longish journey, enlivened by the agreeable conversation of an elderly French artist, who was travelling through Belgium for the purpose of enjoying the scenery, I reached Paliseul, from which one of the useful steam tramways took me on towards Bouillon. The last portion of the journey, after Noirefontaine is passed, is one of the most singular surprises in the matter of scenery which it has been my lot to witness. Passing through a large wood, we reach a clearing from

which one looks down from a giddy height, not altogether congenial to weak nerves, upon the valley below, and shortly afterwards Bouillon, with its ancient fortress standing out conspicuous above the town, and the placid Semois, with its graceful windings, bursts upon the view. Noirefontaine, which I mentioned above, is a small and rather straggling village, peaceful enough at the present time, but once, in 1794, the scene of a bloody conflict between the Austrian army and a detachment of French soldiers. These, amounting to no more than 1200 in number, were soon put to flight, and the town of Bouillon was afterwards entered by the victorious Austrians, who appear to have treated the inhabitants with much barbarity. One hundred and eighty women were rendered widows, and 388 children became fatherless on that ill-fated day. Its political result was the annexation of the independent duchy of Bouillon by the French in the following year.

I found most comfortable quarters at the Hôtel de la Poste, near the bridge, occupying a room close to that to which Napoleon III. was brought as a prisoner, on the 3rd of September 1870, after the disastrous defeat at Sedan. The old woman who keeps the small shop opposite to the hotel had a vivid recollection of the occurrence. "It was terrible," she said, "to see the waggons of wounded men crossing the bridge, in a melancholy procession, for weeks after the battle."

With regard to this hotel, I may set down here a conversation which I held with some cyclists at the *table d'hôte* respecting the rules of the road in Belgium. As I had long suspected, these regulations are only too ill defined. For example, in one province the cyclist is supposed to keep to the right side of the road, while in the next he is expected, as in our own country, to ride on the left. The Belgian coachman, too, is apt to take short cuts whenever it suits his fancy, the result being that the unfortunate cyclist frequently finds himself in an uncertain and embarrassing position, and is fortunate if he escape without an accident. I am told that the Belgian Tourist Club is endeavouring to arrive at a uniform solution of the difficulty,—the sooner the better.

I do not think, from observation, that the police regulation with reference to speed—viz., seven and a half miles an hour in the town and eighteen and a half in the country—is strictly adhered to. Many cyclists in Belgium seem to me to reverse the figures, and to proceed through the towns at something approaching the last-named rate of velocity. The most obnoxious, though perhaps not the most dangerous, are the petroleum-tricycles, which are infinitely more common in Belgium than in England, as the dust which they create is quite out of proportion to the size of the vehicle, and one wonders what the condition of the person in the little carriage, so often attached to these cycles, must be

at the end of a long ride. But there is no accounting for tastes, and perhaps, after all, the easy method of travelling compensates for the inconvenience occasioned by a dust-bath.

A visit to the castle at Bouillon can only produce one impression, and that is, that of all the numerous fortresses in the Ardennes it is the one which merits most attention, on account both of its historic interest and of the excellent state of preservation of its ruins. Indeed, it can scarcely be termed a ruin, for were it not commanded by the neighbouring heights it would still be a fortress of considerable strength. But modern artillery would soon render such a position untenable.

The huge, dark fortress stands upon a high rock above the winding Semois, here surrounded by steep and wooded banks, and offers one of the most perfect types of the medieval stronghold; oubliettes, dungeons, subterranean passages, rock-hewn staircases, all contribute to give to the castle of Godfrey de Bouillon an old-world air, which charms the spectator and conveys him in fancy hundreds of years back to the days of long-past feudalism and romance.

To enter the chateau one must cross two draw-bridges, beyond the second of which is a moat, said to have been filled with water only in time of siege. There was little danger of a water-famine, for a well within the walls descends many feet below the bed of the Semois. It was in 1095 that Godfrèy

de Bouillon, then present at the siege of Rome, fell ill, and vowed that should he recover he would endeavour to free Palestine from the invading armies of the Saracens. The part which he played in the crusade is well known. It was Godfrey de Bouillon who, when Jerusalem was captured, refused the title of king offered to him by the Crusaders, on the ground that he would never wear a crown of gold in the city in which his Saviour had worn a crown of thorns.

The cession of the duchy brought about endless complications and troubles, entailing a series of wars between Godfrey's heirs, the Bishops of Liége, and the La Marcks, Princes of Sedan. At the Revolution in 1794, Bouillon became a republic; and in 1814 Philip of Auvergne, a captain in the English navy, was recognised as ruler by the inhabitants. In 1815 Bouillon was incorporated with the Netherlands, and in 1830 became a portion of the kingdom of Belgium.

The Fauteuil of Godfrey, a kind of stone bench placed in a gallery hewn out of the rock, faces in the direction of the French frontier, and is supposed to be the spot from which the knight surveyed the approach of the enemy's squadrons. The Tower of Austria and the round and clock towers are amongst the most important in the defences of the castle, the prospect from which, extending over both town and river-valley, is extensive, and should on no account be neglected.



A short distance from the chateau in the Champs-Prévôts are the barracks constructed in 1680 by the order of Louis XIV., since which time the town has never been without a garrison.

After visiting the castle I walked down to the river-side, and watched the anglers who were trying their fortune on the banks of the clear Semois. One old gentleman with whom I entered into conversation was most communicative. "There are plenty of trout and barbel," he said, "but they are hard to catch": he was baiting with potatoes for the latter, but had had no sport. I informed him that in England we usually employed worms for this purpose, and that for barbel one was in the habit of casting in large numbers as ground-bait, some persons throwing as many as 5s. worth into the water before commencing to fish. This seemed to strike him as great waste of money, and no doubt he thought that English anglers were unduly extravagant.

"Many English came to see the castle in the summer," he said, "but none remained for the winter, although it was not cold; but sometimes there were young English ladies staying with the Juge de Paix for the purpose of learning the language." He had lived at Bouillon himself for six years, after having been for forty-two years in Government employ at Namur. No doubt it was a satisfaction to him, after so long a period of official work, to be able to while away his time, undisturbed, on the banks of this

charming river, and beneath the shadow of Godfrey's stately castle.

For Bouillon, once so warlike, has now become a tranquil and flourishing provincial town, solely occupied in the less exciting but more profitable pursuits of peace and industry.



## RELIGIOUS BODIES IN BELGIUM

**B**ELGIUM is a Roman Catholic country; but by the constitution all forms of worship are tolerated, provided that their ministers conform to the laws and regulations decreed by the State. No one can be compelled to take part in the acts or ceremonies of a religious body or to observe its days of rest, nor has the State power to intervene in the appointment of ministers of worship, or to forbid them to correspond with their superiors should they wish to do so. The Government, however, is accustomed to exercise a certain power of veto in matters connected with the press. The State undertakes the payment of clerical salaries and pensions, the funds necessary for this purpose finding a place in the annual budget.

The Roman Catholic religion is practised in Belgium under the direction of an archbishop and five bishops. The archbishop has three vicars-general, a chapter of twelve canons, and a seminary. Each bishopric has two vicars-general, a chapter of eight canons, and a seminary as well.

The cathedral church is at the same time a

parish, except in the diocese of Liège. There must be at least one parish in each legal district, and public chapels may be added, wherever they may be thought necessary. In the case of prisons or religious communities a private chapel is allowed. The formation of a diocese or parish of any kind must be made with the consent of the Government, if it is to receive a portion of the subsidy granted by the State.

The parishes are placed under a *curé*, answering somewhat to our rector or vicar; the chapels under a chaplain; and the oratories under a *vicairé*, or almoner, who occupies a position somewhat similar to that of the curate in England. Should a *curé* find himself unable to perform his duties satisfactorily, owing to age or infirmity, he may ask for a *vicairé* to assist him. The *curés*, chaplains, and almoners are under the supervision of a dean, whose duties resemble those of the archdeacon in an English diocese rather than those of a cathedral dignitary. All ecclesiastical functionaries in a diocese are nominated by the bishop.

The stipends of the Roman Catholic clergy in Belgium are not high according to our standard. Thus, an archbishop receives no more than £840; a bishop, £200 less, or about the equivalent of a good living in England. The vicars-general are paid about £130 a-year, which with us is not an excessive salary for a curate. A *curé* of the first class receives £82, and one of the second £64; the *vicairé* or chaplain a good deal less—usually £30 a-year. Of course we must

take into consideration the fact that their expenses are relatively small, and that the celibacy of the Roman Catholic clergy renders the insignificance of the emolument of less importance. In addition to this, these incomes, though comparatively small, are constant, and not liable to diminish through agricultural depression or other causes.

The temporal administration of the churches under Government is confided to a body called the "Fabric," which is charged with the maintenance and preservation of the buildings, the administration of the alms, and of the different funds belonging to the parish. Each Fabric is composed of a council and a committee of churchwardens. The council consists of nine members in parishes where the population amounts to 5000 or more, and of five members in all others. The *ex-officio* members of the council are the *curé*, who is chairman, and may be represented in his absence by the *vicaire*, and the mayor of the commune, who may be represented by an alderman.

The council holds four ordinary assemblies in each year—on the first Sunday in the months of January, April, July, and October. On these occasions the accounts and business matters connected with the church are gone through and discussed by the council. The committee of churchwardens is composed of three members of the council of the Fabric and an ecclesiastic belonging to the church. It meets on the first Sunday in every month for the purpose of preparing the accounts which are to be brought

before the council, and to occupy itself with the temporal needs of the parish generally.

The Archbishop of Malines is Primate of Belgium. The present archbishop is Cardinal Goossens, who was appointed Bishop of Namur in 1883, succeeding to the primacy in the following year. He was created cardinal in 1889. The bishoprics are those of Liège, Namur, Tournai, Ghent, and Bruges.

The number of convents and sisterhoods in Belgium is very large. Most of the inmates' time is devoted to the education of the young and to the care of the sick. The Augustines, for example, take the hospitals of St Jean and St Pierre at Brussels under their charge, as well as others at Liège and Antwerp. The Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul at Louvain devote themselves to the gratuitous instruction of the children of the poor, and to visiting the infirm in their own houses. The Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary at Ghent take special charge of deaf-and-dumb persons, as well as of orphans and people of unsound mind. But these are only a few out of the many orders which might be mentioned.

It is interesting to remember that the present Pope, Leo XIII., was at one time the papal representative or nuncio at the Court of Belgium. Monseigneur Pecci (as he then was) succeeded M. Fornari as nuncio in 1843. He arrived at Brussels at a period of great political tension. His predecessor, M. Fornari, had been on much better terms with the Government than with the Belgian bishops. The

conflict between the latter and the Minister of the Interior, M. Nothomb, over the Education Act of 1842, had just reached an acute stage. The Act recognised the claims of the primary schools to a certain extent, but the Government, preferring to hold the balance evenly between the contending parties, applied the law in a half-hearted manner. The Belgian bishops protested in a letter against this equivocal attitude of the authorities. Monseigneur Pecci was asked on his arrival to use his influence to silence the recalcitrant bishops. Preferring to incur the Minister's displeasure, he supported the action of the prelates.

The Government claimed to be allowed to appoint all members of the Examining Boards, two-thirds of whom were *de jure* selected by the Chambers. Against this the Belgian Catholics protested unanimously, by means of their bishops, receiving such good support from the young nuncio that M. Nothomb's Bill was rejected by a large majority, greatly to the disgust of the Minister. The Life of Pope Leo XIII., recently written by M. de Narfon, throws a side-light on the aspect of Belgium as viewed by Italian eyes nearly sixty years ago.

"What a delightful country you have," said Monseigneur Pecci to a Belgian statesman; "I have spent five years in it, and I feel as if I had been five years in Paradise." At another time he remarked of the Belgians, "I cannot but praise the kindness and the strong religious feeling of this people." And again he

comments on the good and hospitable nature of King Leopold's subjects, and admires the state of development attained by the national industries.

Notwithstanding the fact that Leopold I. was a Protestant—though his wife, Marie Louise, was an ardent Roman Catholic—the present Pope seems to



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have been on excellent terms with the Belgian monarch.

"Really, Monseigneur Pecci," said Leopold one day, "you are almost as good a politician as you are a prelate."

Monseigneur Pecci, while nuncio, effected much in the internal administration of the Belgian Church,



intervening successfully in a quarrel about reform between the University of Louvain and the Jesuit College at Namur, and doing a great deal to define the relations between the bishops and the religious orders in Belgium. He also used his influence to found a Belgian college at Rome, which he endowed with great liberality on succeeding to the Papacy. When at length he left Brussels to undertake the duties of his new see of Perugia, he received innumerable proofs of esteem and respect from both religious and political bodies in Belgium. The liking which he had acquired for the country seems to have remained by him in after-years. He introduced several Belgian industries into Perugia, and whenever the affairs of his diocese brought him to Rome, it was at the Belgian Ecclesiastical College that he was accustomed to seek for hospitality.

The Belgian Protestants are divided mainly into two groups—"The Union of Protestant Evangelical Churches," and "The Evangelical Society, or Christian-Missionary Church." These are identical in faith and practice, but while the first named receives subsidies from the State, the other lives solely by the liberality of its adherents and private generosity. Although the two are similar in organisation, they have their separate synods and managing committees. In this way there may happen to exist in the same town or in adjoining neighbourhoods churches belonging to different groups, but working

in perfect harmony in their own sphere of action. The *pasteurs* of the two Churches—for it is scarcely necessary to mention that it is by this name that the clergy of the Protestant Church are designated—will meet together in a friendly spirit at conferences, festivals, and funerals, just in the same way as the clergy of different schools of thought in England.

The union of Protestant Evangelical Churches was recognised by a royal decree of May 6, 1839, and, as was mentioned above, receives monetary aid from the State. It possesses three consistorial churches at Antwerp, two at Brussels, and one in Mons, Tournai, and Verviers.

Its synod supervises in addition certain unrecognised churches at Bruges, Malines, Jemappes, and elsewhere. One of the best-known churches belonging to this community is that near the Botanical Gardens at Brussels.

Another of the Brussels Evangelical communities used to hold its services in an upper room at a café near the park. "Petit Paris" was, I think, the name of the place. The service was reverently conducted in all respects, but an occasional clatter of plates and glasses in the room below would make one wonder at times whether there were no other places in so large a town where a religious service could be held, that recourse was had to a building so little in harmony with the purposes of worship.

In smaller towns and communes the Protestants are obliged to take any large room which may be

vacant until sufficient funds have been raised to admit of the building of a permanent church. In some districts these smaller communities are greatly on the increase. It is said, indeed, that the Protestants in the Borinage, or Mons neighbourhood, amount already to the eighth or tenth part of the whole population. In addition to the *pasteurs*, the Protestant Churches employ evangelists and Scripture-readers, as well as the *colporteurs*, who distribute religious books and tracts.

There are some fifty-five *pasteurs*, about twelve evangelists, and eight readers in Belgium, the number of persons who profess this form of worship being above 15,000.

The young are encouraged to frequent the Sunday-schools and missionary classes, which are to be found in most districts where the Protestants have gained a more or less permanent footing. These institutions have a managing committee common to all Belgium, and are always ready to admit the children of Roman Catholic parents.

"The Christian Unions" for young men and women form an interesting feature in the work of this body. There are more than fifty of these associations organised for the benefit of the young, without distinction of nationality or Church. In large towns, such as Brussels and Antwerp, they have suitable buildings at their disposal, which are not only available for the purposes of Biblical study and missionary work, but also as places of recreation, in which

music, gymnastics, and other diversions may be indulged in.

The members of the Protestant Churches are much devoted to the cause of temperance, and belong to the "Blue Cross" or "Blue Star," which correspond to our Blue-Ribbon Army. They have their various beneficent societies, such as the "Work for Missions in Heathen Countries," the "Society for the Observance of Sunday," and the "Society for the Preservation of Public Morality."

They possess in addition a special orphanage at Uccle, and one or two other establishments of a similar character.

Several journals are published in the interests of the community, such as the 'Élan,' the 'Jeunesse chrétienne,' and the 'Bulletin,' which are the organs of the Unions mentioned above. Besides these, there are the 'Chrétien belge,' and a newspaper for the churches of the Flemish tongue, which possesses the rather dreadful title of the 'Maranatha.'

The number of Jews in Belgium is comparatively small, amounting altogether to less than 4000.

## HOW BELGIUM IS EDUCATED

### I. PRIMARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

**I**N every commune or parish in Belgium there is at least one *École Communale*, or Primary School. In some cases the school is only a private institution taken over by the local authorities and adapted by them to suit the requirements of the parish. The Council of the commune determines the number of the schools as well as that of the teachers to be employed; their resolutions, however, are to some extent under the supervision of the Permanent Deputation of the Province. The commune takes care that all children (who have the right to gratuitous instruction and do not frequent private schools) should receive a proper education.

It may be interesting to note the classes of persons who have the right to claim free education for their children. They are—

Those who pay less than 10 francs to the State in parishes of less than 5000 inhabitants; those who pay less than 15 francs in communes of 5000 to 20,000 souls; and those who pay a con-

tribution of less than 30 francs in towns where the population exceeds 20,000 inhabitants.

Every year the heads of the Primary Schools draw up a list of the children of from six to fourteen years of age for whom free education is claimed by the parents. These lists are forwarded to the authorities of the commune, who write upon them the exact amount of the contribution paid by the parents. The Communal Council then determines the amount of the fee due to the teacher. Subsequently the list is submitted to the approval of the Permanent Deputation, which, after consultation with the authorities of the Bureau de Bienfaisance and Communal Council, decide the payment to be made by the Bureau in the case of the children to whom free education is granted.

Primary Education in Belgium is held to include instruction in religion and morality; reading, writing, and arithmetic; the legal system of weights and measures, and (according to the needs of the localities in which the children reside) the elements of the French, Flemish, or German language. Besides these subjects, the geography and history of Belgium, drawing, singing, and gymnastics, find a place in the programme. Needlework also is taught to girls; while in rural districts the boys are instructed in the elements of agriculture.

The delicate matter of religious teaching is arranged in this way. The ministers of different denominations are invited to give instruction ac-

cording to their form of worship, or to have it given under their supervision either by the teacher or by a person accepted by the Communal Council. The first or last half hour of the morning or evening study is devoted to this subject daily. Children whose parents expressly demand it are exempted from attendance at these classes.

The inspection of this religious teaching is in the hands of the Delegates of the Heads of the religious parties, and these Delegates are appointed with the approval of the Minister of Education. Every year in October each of the Heads of religious parties addresses a report to the Minister of Education, detailing the manner in which instruction is given in the school which comes under his notice.

The teachers are expected by the law to neglect no opportunity of inculcating the principles of morality in their pupils, or of inspiring them with sentiments of duty and patriotism. In their teaching they must abstain from all attacks on the religious convictions of the families whose children are intrusted to their care.

The expenses of Primary Education fall upon the communes, but a certain sum is voted yearly by the Government and divided amongst the different schools. The teachers must be Belgians, and in possession of diplomas indicating their capacity for their duties. They must have attended the classes of a Normal School for at least two years, or be provided with a Certificate of the Middle Class

(*Enseignement Moyen*). Their appointment, suspension, and dismissal is in the hands of the Communal Council, subject to the approval of the Permanent Deputation; but both the Council and the teacher have the right of appeal to the king.

The head-master of a school must be chosen from among the members of the staff who have accomplished at least five years' service. The salary of the teacher is fixed by the Communal Council, but cannot be less than the sum indicated in the following table:—

Category.	Number of inhabitants of communes.	Master.	Mistress.	Assistant Master.	Assistant Mistress.
		Francs.	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.
5th	1,500 or under	1200	1200	1000	1000
4th	1,501 to 10,000	1400	1300	1100	1100
3rd	10,001 to 40,000	1600	1400	1200	1100
2nd	40,001 to 100,000	1800	1600	1300	1200
1st	Upwards of 100,000	2400	2200	1400	1200

Each teacher has a right to a dwelling or to an indemnity, which is fixed at the following sum, according to the above-mentioned categories:—

				Francs.
5th category	.	.	.	200
4th "	.	.	.	300
3rd "	.	.	.	400
2nd "	.	.	.	600
1st "	.	.	.	800



When husband and wife are heads of schools, they can claim one dwelling or indemnity only.

The above minimum salaries may appear low; for example, 2400 francs, or £96, would seem inadequate to the master of an English Board School in a town of 100,000 inhabitants; but when we remember the difference of the cost of living in the two countries, the discrepancy appears less. At the expiration of every period of four years' meritorious service the teacher has the right to an increase of 100 francs in his salary, until the minimum legal salary attached to his category has been increased by 600 francs.

A word about school inspection. Provision is made for it by means of Head-Inspectors in every province, as well as by the ordinary District Inspectors. Each of the latter visits every school in his district at least once a-year, and once at least in every three months he unites the teachers under his supervision in conference, and addresses to the Head-Inspector a report on the state of Primary Education in the communes which he has inspected.

Each Head-Inspector presides annually at one of the conferences of teachers, and visits at least every two years each school under his charge. He in turn sends a yearly report to the Minister of Education on the condition of the schools which he has visited. The Inspectors themselves must undergo an examination before being authorised to perform their duties. They must possess the diploma of teachers in Primary, or of Professors in Middle, Schools, and

must have given practical instruction during ten years in schools of this character. The examination is both oral and in writing; in addition to which the candidate must inspect a school, named by the Board of Examiners, and make his report upon it immediately after his inspection. The oral and written examinations bear upon the art of teaching, its history and practice. The systems of various educational theorists, such as Locke, Froebel, and Herbert Spencer, must be criticised and explained.

The salaries of the Inspectors are determined as follows:—

A. HEAD INSPECTORS.			B. DISTRICT INSPECTORS.		
	Francs.			Francs.	
1st class . . .	7000	to 7500	1st class . . .	4000	to 4500
2nd class . . .	6000	" 6500	2nd class . . .	3500	" 3800
3rd class . . .	5000	" 5500	3rd class . . .	3000	" 3300

Travelling expenses are allowed at the rate of 1 franc for every kilomètre on ordinary roads or by water, and 50 centimes for every five kilomètres by railway. For hotel expenses a Head-Inspector is allowed 12 francs and a District Inspector 6 francs a-day.

A lady is sometimes appointed to inspect the needlework in the girls' schools. She receives no pay, but is allowed travelling and hotel expenses, on the scale accorded to a Head-Inspector.

In every centre a library is established for the use of the teachers in the Primary Schools of the district,

as well as a museum, containing collections bearing upon the subjects taught.

Next to the Primary Classes, on the educational ladder, come the *Écoles Moyennes* or Middle Schools. These are of two kinds, the Upper Middle School, known as *Athénées royales*, and the Lower Middle Schools, which include certain Industrial and Commercial Schools as well. The Lower Middle are termed *Écoles Moyennes*, and exist for both boys and girls.

The *Athénées* usually receive day boys only, but in communes where such schools exist the mayor is allowed to arrange with private individuals for the maintenance of boarding-houses in connection with these establishments.

No one can be appointed Professor in the *Athénées* who has not obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Science and Mathematics; in the same way the Head-Masters of the Middle Schools must have the diploma of Professor of *Enseignement Moyen* (middle education). The *Maître d'Études*, whose duty it is to supervise the studies of the pupils in the *Athénée*, must have passed successfully one at least of the examinations in philosophy and science, and must possess in addition the diploma required of teachers in the Primary Schools. No doctor of philosophy or letters can be appointed Professor of history or geography in the *Athénée* of a Flemish town unless his diploma



**BOMAL.**

From a painting by J. H. Weismüller.

states that he has passed an examination, and also given public instruction, in the Flemish tongue. Only Belgians or naturalised subjects can exercise the duties of Professor or Head-Master; but certain exceptions are made in the case of Professors of foreign languages, music, &c.

The Government appoints the staff of the Athénées and Middle Schools, and makes provision through Inspectors for their proper administration. Any member of the teaching staff, or Inspector of schools of this class, may claim a pension at the age of fifty-five on the completion of thirty years' service, or may be retired on an allowance at the age of sixty after fifteen years' work.

Should the Government contribute to the maintenance of a Middle School, it does so on the condition that the establishment accept the programme of studies drawn up by the Government, and also that the books employed in the schools, as well as the arrangements and accounts, be subject to its approval. Provinces and communes, however, if they conform to the law, have the right to found and maintain Middle Schools, of which they have the sole control.

Every year the members of the Middle Schools hold a meeting at the expense of the State. Participation in this meeting is obligatory for members of the public schools, but optional for those of private establishments.

An École Normale, or training school, in connec-

tion with the Middle Schools prepares young men and women for a scholastic career. Scholarships are awarded and the diploma of supernumerary professor of middle instruction is granted to the candidates who have satisfied a special jury or board of examiners.

The *Athénées*, or Royal Colleges, are not allowed to exceed twenty in number. For purposes of work they are divided into three sections, those of Greek and Latin Humanities, Latin Humanities, and Modern Subjects. The number of classes or years of study is fixed at seven in each of the three sections. The programme of the Greek and Latin Division includes the following subjects: Religion, Latin, Greek, French, Flemish, German, English, History and Geography, Mathematics, Natural Science, Drawing, Music, and Gymnastics. The programme of the Latin section is the same, with the exception of Greek. The Third, or Modern Course, includes the same subjects as the First Section, but excludes both Latin and Greek, teaching commercial subjects instead.

In order to be admitted into an *Athénée* the pupil, who must be at least eleven years of age, must pass an examination in French grammar and dictation; and in the elements of Flemish or German in those parts of the country where those languages are spoken. Besides this, he must show a competent knowledge of the geography of Belgium, and of the first four rules of arithmetic, decimal fractions, weights and measures.

Running my eye over a recent time-table, I notice that the pupils in the Walloon Athénées have somewhat lighter hours than their Flemish rivals, since for the latter three modern languages are obligatory. But in no case do the hours exceed thirty - two a-week.

A museum containing commercial products, both home and foreign, is connected with every Athénée. This is placed under the direction of the Professor of Commercial Science, who is responsible for the preservation of the objects. A certain sum is devoted annually to the purchase of specimens and to the maintenance of the museum. Steps are taken to obtain, as far as possible gratuitously, from the consuls in foreign countries specimens of the products of the lands in which they reside. Independently of these museums, however, the Government provides collections of natural history, as well as pictures and photographs, for illustrating lectures in history and geography.

The Head of the Athénée is termed the "Prefect of Studies." He is appointed by the king, and all the Professors are subordinate to him. He resides in the building, but is not allowed to take boarders, nor is he permitted to teach, except by the special permission of the Minister of Education.

It is his duty to see that the programmes of study and regulations are properly carried out. He pays frequent visits to the class-rooms, with the double object of ascertaining how the Professors perform



QUARRY NEAR CHANCE.

From a drawing by J. H. Weismüller.



their duties, and of assuring himself of the progress and good conduct of the pupils. Should he notice anything amiss, and any negligence on the part of the Professor, he immediately warns him, and if this has no effect, refers the matter to the Minister of Education. He records his observations on the conduct, method, and knowledge of the Professors in a private register, and keeps account in the same manner of the progress and industry of the scholars.

He is consulted on the appointment as well as the promotion of the Professors, whom he can suspend from their duties; but he is obliged to inform the Governing Body of the reasons which have compelled him to take such action. In the same way the Prefect has the power to expel a pupil for misconduct, but in this case he is bound to give his reasons not only to the Governing Body, but to the boy's parents as well.

Except during the holidays he cannot absent himself for more than two days without being authorised to do so by the Minister of Education or the Governing Body. Finally, it is part of the Prefect's duties to correspond with the parents with reference to the conduct and progress of their children, and also to act as intermediary in all communications which pass between the Professors and Ministers of Education.

The Professors of the Athénées are divided into three classes, and all must begin in the lowest. They are obliged to conform to the programme and instructions of the Prefect in all that concerns either

teaching or discipline. They are not allowed to exercise any other employment without the permission of the Minister, nor can they receive boarders without the consent of the Governing Body, which does not grant leave without the assent of the Prefect. The Maître d'Études and Surveillants are also under the supervision of the Prefect. Their special duty is to supervise the discipline of the school in the Professors' absence. They can be ordered by the Prefect to help in the teaching of the school, but for this they receive extra salary.

Besides these officials, every Athénée possesses a Governing Body and a Financial Secretary. The Governing Body is composed of the College of Mayor and Aldermen and of six members, nominated by the king, from a double list presented by the Communal Council. The Prefect is the sole member of the staff of the Athénée with whom the Governing Body corresponds and has business relations.

The Financial Secretary enters the minutes of the meetings of the governors, and registers their resolutions and correspondence. The members of the Governing Body are allowed to visit the class-rooms at all hours, and to be present at examinations and at the lessons given by the Professors, and to supervise in every way the carrying out of the regulations of the school.

Every year before the 1st of July they address a report to the Minister of Education on the discipline and management of the Athénée, and make reflec-

tions, should they so desire it, on the staff, programmes, books, and general condition of the establishment. Such is the organisation of the *Athénée*, which resembles in its main features that of the Grammar School in England.

Coming next to the *Écoles Moyennes*, or Lower Middle Schools, the number of which is fixed at one hundred, we find that admission may be granted to the preparatory department at the early age of six. This department is organised on the basis of the Primary School, and comprises a six years' course of study. The *École Moyenne* itself includes three classes, termed the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years respectively. The subjects taught in these schools consist of religious teaching by ministers of the different denominations; the mother-tongue, whether French, Flemish, or German; a second obligatory language, such as French for the schools in Flemish or German districts, and Flemish or German in the Walloon-speaking localities; and a third language, which is not compulsory, either Flemish, English, or German. Besides these, geography, Belgian history, elementary mathematics and science, book-keeping, drawing, singing, and the outlines of commercial law, find a place in the curriculum of the Lower Middle School. It is proposed to create in eight of these schools a commercial, industrial, or agricultural section, according to the needs of the locality; but if after sufficient trial it is ascertained that the special sections have gained the confidence of parents and have answered

to the expectations of the Government, these classes will be placed upon a permanent footing, and their number will be increased from time to time as it may appear to be desirable. The staff of the *École Moyenne* consists of a Director or Head-Master, Regents, and Teachers. The duties of the Director are similar to those of the Prefect in the *Athénée*, while the number of hours a-week devoted to study is also about the same. In addition to the one hundred Lower Middle Schools for boys, the Government has made provision for the foundation of fifty similar institutions for girls.

These are organised in much the same way as the boys' schools, and are placed under the charge of a Head-Mistress, *Régentes*, and Governesses.

The salaries of the staff are tabulated as follows :—

	Minimum. Francs.	Maximum. Francs.
Head-Mistress . . . .	2800	3300
<i>Régente</i> , 2nd class . . . .	2000	2200
<i>Régente</i> , 1st class . . . .	2300	2500
Governess, 2nd class . . . .	1600	1800
Governess, 1st class . . . .	2000	2200

These salaries may be augmented by sums of 200 francs at the least, or 500 francs at the most, if the holder of the post give evidence of superior merit. The general course of study for girls is the same as that for boys, with the exception that three hours a-week are devoted to needlework and one or two to domestic economy.

## II. THE UNIVERSITIES

There are four universities in Belgium: the State Universities of Liège and Ghent, and the Free Universities of Brussels and Louvain. All four have the power to confer degrees in certain subjects.

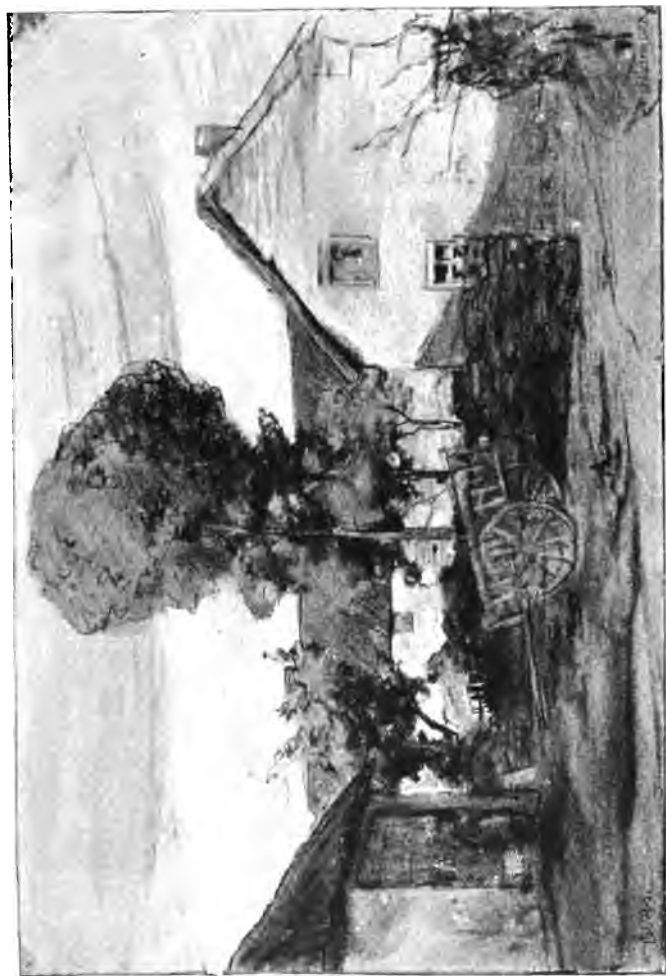
The State Universities include the four Faculties of Philosophy and Letters, Science, Law, and Medicine.

The department of Philosophy and Letters comprises Oriental Literature, Anthropology, Metaphysics, Greek Literature, Latin Literature, French Literature, Flemish Literature, Logic, Roman and Greek Antiquities, Moral Philosophy, Archæology.

Besides this rather formidable array of subjects, we find much history set down: thus we have the Political History of the Middle Ages; the Political History of Belgium; the History of Philosophy, Ancient and Modern; Modern Political History; Political Economy; the History of Ancient Literature.

It will be seen that the list of subjects includes most of those required by the Examiners in the Honour Schools of Literæ Humaniores and Modern History at Oxford, as well as those which find a place in the Classical and History Triposes at the sister University of Cambridge.

The subjects for the Faculty of Science, both Mathematical, Physical, and Natural, are — Higher Algebra; Geometry; Differential and Integral Cal-



HIVES, NEAR LAROCHE.  
From a drawing by J. H. Weismüller.

culus; Theory of Probabilities; Mechanics; the Theory of Engines and their application to Industry; Astronomy; Experimental, Industrial, and Mathematical Physics; Chemistry, both Organic and Inorganic; Applied Chemistry; Mineralogy and Geology; Botany, Zoology, Anatomy, and Comparative Physiology.

Besides these subjects the University of Ghent provides instruction in Architecture, Naval Construction, Descriptive Geometry with special application to engines, roads, and canals, and also in the working of hydraulic apparatus.

In the Faculty of Science at Liège instruction is given, besides, in metallurgy and the working of mines, and geometry as applied to the construction of engines. The Faculty of Law includes the law in all its branches—Roman, Civil, Criminal, Military, and Commercial; while the Faculty of Medicine appears to be equally comprehensive in its scope.

The professors at the university are divided into two divisions—the Ordinary and the Extraordinary Professors. The first enjoy the comparatively small salary of 7000 francs (£280), while the latter receive 5000 francs a-year. The Government, however, can increase the salary of the first named by a sum of from 1000 to 3000 francs.

In each university there are twelve professors for Philosophy, thirteen for Science, ten for Law, and thirteen for Medicine. At Liège there are in addition ten professors for Technical Instruction.

The professors are not permitted to give private lessons, or to exercise any other profession without the consent of the Government. They are appointed by the king, but no one may be a professor who does not hold the degree of doctor or licentiate in that branch of instruction which he is called upon to teach. Notwithstanding this regulation, the Government sometimes makes exceptions in the case of those who have shown conspicuous merit in some special department of learning. Provision is made for the retirement on a pension of the professors and other members of the university staff if they have attained the age of seventy, or have become unfit through infirmity to fulfil the duties of their office. They may, however, retain their posts after the age of seventy if authorised to do so by the Government. They can also claim their pension, irrespective of age, if they have accomplished thirty years of academic service, or if they have attained the age of seventy and can reckon at least ten years' service.

The pension of an emeritus professor is equal to the average of his salary during the last five years. Professors who have become unfit for work after only five years' service may be retired upon a pension equal to one-sixth of their average salary.

The academic authorities are the Rector of the university, the Secretary, the Deans of the Faculty, the Academic Council, and the College of Assessors.

The Academic Council is composed of the Professors, assembled under the presidency of the



Rector, Secretary, and Deans of the Faculty. The Rector is named by the king for three years. His province is to deal with everything that concerns the university, and he is allowed to take the advice of the Assessors, should he deem this necessary. He inscribes the names of the students on the roll, and having the supervision of their conduct, may summon any student before him whom he thinks in need of reprimand or friendly advice. The Secretary of the Academic Council draws up the reports of the meetings of the Council and of the College of Assessors. Besides this, he has charge of the seal and archives of the university, and sees to the printing and publication of the programmes of study which have received the approval of the Minister of Education.

The academic year is divided into two half-years or semestres. In like manner there are two vacations, the one lasting from the first Saturday in August to the first Tuesday in October, and the other from the Thursday before Easter Day to the second Tuesday following.

The Minister, acting on the advice of the Professors and Council, fixes the duration of the courses of lectures. These are delivered in the French language, except in special cases decided upon by the Minister. Each lecture lasts for one hour at least, and the undergraduates are encouraged to attend more particularly those lectures which bear specially upon the subjects of the examination for which they are preparing. The Professors assure themselves of

their presence by means of a roll-call, and report every three months to the Rector those whom they find remiss in attendance. The Rector in turn informs the youths' parents of the negligence of their sons.

The only punishments meted out to offenders in a Belgian university are a warning, the suspension of the right to attend lectures, and expulsion from the university.

While the first penalty may be pronounced by the Rector, the other two are inflicted by the Academic Council, two-thirds of the votes being necessary in the case of expulsion. Each student pays a registration fee for the course of lectures relating to the subjects of his examination. For lectures in the Faculties of Philosophy and Law the fee is fixed at 250 francs a-year (£10), while for the other courses a payment of 200 francs is sufficient. Should the student desire to follow a single course of lectures, a lesser fee, varying from 30 to 80 francs, is accepted. Any one who has paid the fees for a year's course is at liberty to attend the lectures for several years in succession without further payment.

The fees are divided among the professors who have given the course. The examinations for degrees take place twice a-year, in July and October. They are public, and the certificates and diplomas delivered to successful candidates state that the recipient has passed his examination "in a satisfactory manner," "with distinction," "great distinction," or "very great distinction," as the case may be.

In addition to the ordinary diplomas and degrees of Candidate, Licentiate, and Doctor, the honorary degree of Doctor is conferred by the Council on persons of distinguished merit, whether Belgians or foreigners.

The organisation of the Free Universities of Brussels and Louvain resembles that of the State Universities. Only Catholics are admitted to the latter, the professors being appointed by the episcopal body. At Brussels a council of administration, under the burgomaster of the town, directs the university and appoints the professors. Much has been done in Belgium of recent years, and especially by the passing of the law of 1891, to simplify the system of examination for entrance into the different professions.

The diplomas for the various professional degrees are delivered not only by the State Universities, but also by a jury appointed by the Government.

By the law of 1891 any establishment of "Higher Education" is considered as performing the functions of a university, provided that it gives instruction in the Faculties of Philosophy, Law, Science, and Medicine. The juries appointed by the Government are composed in such a way that the professors of State-directed colleges and those of private establishments are represented in equal numbers.

The diplomas issued by the jury have no legal value until they have been ratified by a Special Commission at Brussels. This Commission is com-

posed of two councillors of the Cour de Cassation, two members of the Royal Academy of Medicine, and four from the Royal Academy of Science, Letters, and Fine Arts—all appointed by royal decree and holding office for one year. The professors of the universities are not allowed to form a part of the Commission, whose duty it is to assure itself that the diplomas and certificates resulting from the public examinations have been delivered by a properly constituted university body or by one of the juries appointed by the Government.

No one in Belgium can practise a profession for which an academical degree is required by law unless he has previously obtained the diploma, duly ratified in accordance with all the legal requirements.

A knowledge of the Flemish language, as tested by examination, has been required since 1895 from all persons, with the exception of consuls, appointed to judicial office in the provinces of Flanders and Antwerp. The same qualification is demanded of justices of the peace and other judicial officials in the arrondissements of Brussels and Louvain; and is imposed on notaries in the Flemish districts, as well as on the professors of History, Geography, and Germanic Languages in the Athénées of Flemish-speaking towns. A foreign barrister wishing to practice his profession in Belgium must address himself to the Minister of Education. Similarly foreign doctors or chemists would have to make application to the Minister of Agriculture if they wished to follow their

calling on Belgian soil. Their requests would have to be accompanied by the final diploma, stating that the holder has obtained his degree as barrister, doctor, or chemist; and by the State diploma, if it is acquired in the applicants' native country; and by a certificate from the petitioner's own Government, stating that the documents produced carry with them the right of practising the profession throughout the country. Further evidence of competence is required in the case of doctors and chemists, and inquiry is made into the personal character of the petitioner, and into the motives which lead him to settle in Belgium.

After this the Minister of Education transmits the petition to the Central Jury, appointed by the Government to examine for the particular degree with which the petitioner is concerned. The jury verifies the documents, and ascertains whether they are regular and sufficient to justify the designation of barrister, doctor, or chemist, as the case may be. It compares the respective duration of the legal, medical, and pharmaceutical courses in Belgium and other countries, and then decides whether it be necessary for the petitioner to pass another examination. If it be decided that another examination is necessary, it is held under the conditions required by Belgian law for tests of a similar character. Not only are women admitted to the privilege of academic degrees, but they are permitted to enjoy the rights attaching to the possession of the degree of Doctor of Medicine or of Chemistry.

Prizes are awarded by the Government to students at the universities, and others who have satisfied the jury in certain examinations. Every year, at a competition termed the "Concours Universitaire," gold medals and prizes to the value of 400 francs, in money or books, are awarded to the "laureats" or successful candidates.

Travelling bourses or scholarships may also be granted on the recommendation of the examiners, and special prizes may be awarded for various groups of subjects in the Faculties of Philosophy, Law, Science, and Medicine.

Independently of the rewards granted, a diploma on parchment is issued to each successful candidate, and honourable mention is accorded on the recommendation of the jury to those who have obtained at least three-fifths of the marks in each of the three parts of the competition.

Besides these prizes, awarded after public competition, 120 scholarships of 400 francs each may be granted by the Government annually to young Belgians who without such assistance would find themselves unable to follow the "higher educational course." These scholarships are tenable at any one of the four universities for the space of one year, but may be continued on the advice of the professors of the university at which the student is entered. Fourteen Travelling Scholarships of 4000 francs are also offered by the Government, as the result of a competitive examination, to Belgians who have ob-

tained the diploma of Doctor or Engineer within less than two months. These prizes are given in order to help them to visit foreign universities and industrial establishments, or works connected with the profession of engineer. The holders of the Travelling Scholarships are obliged to give satisfactory evidence, through either the Belgian consul or the local authorities, that they have resided abroad during at least nine months of the year. Each of them, moreover, must address a report to the Minister of Education dealing with some question concerning his particular branch of study. The payment of the last quarter of the scholarship is dependent upon the fulfilment of these conditions.

In speaking of Higher Education, one must not omit to mention two important schools—that of Civil Engineering, Arts, and Manufactures, at Ghent, and that of Art, Manufactures, and Mines at Liège. The school at Ghent includes a Preparatory Division, in which instruction is given in the mathematical branches of study which concern civil engineering, the industrial arts, and the construction of bridges and railways. The period of study lasts for two years, and prepares for the Special Schools of Civil Engineering, Arts, and Manufactures, which provide a course of instruction, lasting for two or three years, for those who are destined to become civil, mechanical, or industrial engineers. The Technical School of Arts and Manufactures at Liège issues diplomas conferring the degree of Mining Engineer,

Engineer of Arts and Manufactures, and of Mechanical, Chemical, or Electrical Engineer.

There is an interesting museum of mechanical appliances in connection with this institution which is open to the pupils and under the supervision of one of the professors. There is also a workshop at Liège belonging to the Longdoz Company, whose object is to initiate the students in the work of building engines of various kinds. When they have become familiar with their construction in all its details, they are taken by their professors on visits to factories and works of every description.

### III. PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Besides the provision made at the universities for Professional Education, there are many institutions, established by the enterprise of individuals or of towns, which receive assistance from the Government on the condition of permitting the State to inspect and otherwise intervene for the wellbeing of the school.

Among these institutions subsidised by the State, and under the supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Public Works, are the Superior Institute of Commerce at Antwerp, the Provincial School of Mines at Hainault, the Industrial Schools, the Workshops for Apprentices, the Professional Schools and Courses, and the Schools of Household Management.



The first of these, the Superior Institute of Commerce at Antwerp, was opened as far back as 1853, and claims to be the first school of higher commercial education established in Europe. It has for its object the completion of the commercial education of those destined for a business career, and the continuance of the instruction previously begun in the classes of the Middle Schools. The Institute is administered by a commission of six members, three of whom are named by the Government and three by the Common Council of Antwerp.

The burgomaster of Antwerp acts as President of the Commission by right of his office. The Director and Professors are appointed by Government. A complete course of instruction, both theoretical and practical, is given for two years, during which frequent visits are paid by the pupils to the various industrial establishments of the country.

The programme for the first year's study includes commercial subjects, such as Correspondence in English, French, and German, Book-keeping, Commercial Arithmetic, and business education generally. To these subjects some fifteen hours are devoted a-week. A further period of eight hours is given to the History of Commercial Products, Political Economy, Commercial Geography, and the General Principles of Law.

Modern Languages also are extensively taught, three lessons of an hour each being set apart every week for each of the three languages, English,



**A BELGIAN LANDSCAPE.**  
From a painting by Hyppolyte Boulenger.

Flemish, and German, while another three hours must be devoted to acquiring either Spanish or Italian.

The second year's course consists mainly of a more ample interpretation of the subjects of the previous year. Thus the pupil in the Commercial Division will receive full information as to the quotations at the various Stock Exchanges in Europe and America, and will be expected to understand the transactions when explained in the languages of the country to which they refer. There are also lectures on the General History of Commerce and Industry, on Commercial and Maritime Law, and on the Law and Tariffs of Custom-Houses. An examination is held at the end of the first year's course, which must be passed before the student can enter upon the studies of the second year.

The diploma of Licentiate in Commercial Studies is awarded at the end of the second year to those who satisfy the Examining Jury, appointed by Government. The pupils of the Institute pay a registration fee of 25 francs, and fees to the amount of 200 francs for the first year, and 250 francs for the second. Scholarships to the amount of 600 francs at the most are granted by the Government to young Belgians of moderate means. There are also other scholarships, founded by the different provinces, in favour of students from their own districts.

A sum of 45,000 francs is set aside yearly by the

Minister of Foreign Affairs to be awarded in Traveling Scholarships for the Belgian students of the Institute. There is also a library of some 5000 volumes, and a museum containing specimens of commercial products. The completeness of the latter is chiefly due to the efforts of the diplomatic and consular agents abroad, who are instructed by the Government to procure specimens in the different countries to which they are accredited.

As evidence of the practical nature of the commercial training thus afforded, it may be mentioned, that of the former Belgian students at the Institute a large proportion have become heads and partners in houses of business, bankers, consuls, and otherwise leaders in the commercial world. The London Chamber of Commerce is doing excellent work in England by organising examinations on somewhat similar lines to the Antwerp Institute, but from what I can gather, we have still much to learn from Belgium.

Another establishment of a sound and practical character is the School of Industry and Mines situated at Mons, in the heart of the mining district. It provides a four-year course in such subjects as mechanics, metallurgy, geology, and everything that may be of interest or value to the mining engineer. During the first two years the hours of study are fixed at eight per day.

The students of the third and fourth year are not compelled to work and attend a few lectures

only. The annual admission fee is 120 francs. The students are divisible into two classes, "Effective" and "Free." The former are those who have previously shown, when tested by examination, that they possess the knowledge requisite to follow the lectures with success. They alone have the right, on successfully passing their examinations, to the diploma of Engineer of the School of Mines of Hainault.

The Free pupils are those who have undergone no examination for admission, and are merely authorised to attend certain courses of lectures. Although originally instituted with the object of educating mining engineers alone, the school has trained a large number of other engineers, capable of directing industries of all kinds, to which result its well-furnished library and excellent chemical and electrical laboratories have no doubt much contributed.

We must distinguish between the Professional Schools, which give instruction of a practical character, and the Industrial, in which the teaching is only scientific in its bearing. Several of these schools existing in 1860 were reorganised at the instance of the Minister of the Interior, M. Ch. Rogier, and placed upon a new and uniform basis, which they still retain.

The chief object of an Industrial School, as M. Bertiaux observes in his work on "Professional Education," is "to give the workman a scientific instruction which he cannot acquire in the work-

shop, to develop his intelligence by initiating him into the knowledge of the general laws which govern the transformation of matter, in order to withdraw him gradually from the tyranny of routine, and thus procure for him the means of increasing the economic value of his work, thereby improving his material condition."

The curriculum comprises in general, mathematics in their application to industry, general and applied physics, general and applied chemistry, industrial mechanics, and linear drawing.

Other subjects are taught, according to the industries practised in each locality, such as elementary mineralogy, metallurgy, and architecture, the theory of stone-cutting, mining, methods of weaving, and knowledge of textile fabrics. Professional courses of lectures are organised in several Industrial Schools. Thus at Verviers there is a course on dyeing, at Ghent one on weaving; at Antwerp, Courtrai, and Ghent there are lectures on painting as applied to the imitation of wood and marble. Special courses for stokers of steam-engines are annexed to several schools.

In some establishments special instruction is given in French, book-keeping, and also in more elementary subjects. This is, as a rule, gratuitous, the expenses being met by funds furnished by the commune, province, and State, as well as by the sale of the produce of the school.

Several Industrial Schools have been annexed to

Schools of Design. These are divided into three sections :—

- A. A Preparatory section common to all pupils, and having a course of two years' study.
- B. A School of Design, under the Administration of Beaux-Arts, which subsidises the classes, the course of study occupying three years.
- C. An Industrial section with a three years' curriculum.

All these schools are provided with a library, laboratory, and other aids to efficient teaching.

As an example of an industrial school of this kind mention may be made of that of Liège, which from a small beginning in 1825 has attained to considerable efficiency and proportions. The course, divided into three years, includes—

- 1st year. Arithmetic, Geometry, and Drawing.
- 2nd " General Mechanics, Physics, Geometrical and Mechanical Drawing.
- 3rd " (containing six sections). Industrial Chemistry and Metallurgy, Applied Mechanics and Driving and Stoking of Locomotives, Electricity, Building, Mining, Working in Iron, Steel, &c.

Students who have satisfied the Examiners in any of the above sections receive a diploma stating the amount of distinction which they have obtained.

Six Travelling Scholarships of 300 francs are granted by the Communal Administration of Liège

to the six students who have obtained most marks at the final examination, after passing those of the preceding years with distinction. These scholarships are conferred on the condition that the recipient makes a report on the industrial establishments which he is called upon to visit. The lectures are



**ARDENNES STONE-BREAKER.**

From a drawing by J. H. Weismüller.

given in the evening, every day of the week, from 7.30 to 9.30, from the 1st of October to the 1st of July.

As might be expected in a town so devoted to business, the pupils of the Industrial School of Liège find little difficulty, as a rule, in obtaining remunerative employment. Some of them, indeed, have succeeded in rising to high positions in the world of commerce. Schools of a similar nature, but



adapted to the special circumstances of the neighbourhood, are widely scattered throughout Belgium, in all the centres of industry, and their beneficial influence on the general and technical education of the workmen is unquestionably great.

The Workshops for Apprentices, which answer the same purposes as technical schools, but also award payment for work done, are deserving of more than passing notice. Originally founded to give employment to apprentices out of work, and also to foster the decaying cotton industry, these workshops have since 1861 become a permanent feature amongst the institutions for professional education.

Only those Ateliers or Workshops which have been instituted or adopted by the Communal Authorities can expect to receive assistance from the funds of the State. Such workshops are directed by a managing body of three members, appointed by the State, province, and commune respectively. These give their services gratuitously. Primary instruction is given for at least an hour a-day by the teacher of the commune, while the technical teaching of the apprentices is intrusted to foremen appointed by the governor of the province on the advice of the managers. The foremen are carefully selected, and must be thoroughly competent to teach the theoretical and practical details of the branches of industry taught in the workshop.

Apprentices are admitted at the age of twelve, or perhaps earlier, if they have passed in the subjects of

the Primary course. Those who are not in necessitous circumstances may be required to pay a fee. The managing body take care that the work required of the boys should always be in due proportion to their strength, and in no case may the duration of the day's work exceed twelve hours in length, nor must they work for more than four hours continuously.

A certain payment is made in accordance with the aptitude of the lad for his work: a small percentage of this is deducted and placed in the savings bank, to be employed later on in the purchase of such tools as may be necessary for his trade when he leaves the workshop. Certificates are also given to out-going apprentices.

The workshops are duly inspected by the authorities of the commune, as well as by the Inspector of Professional Education under the Minister of Agriculture. The average wage of the apprentice in such ateliers is about 1 franc a-day. There are some thirty-five of these establishments in Belgium, through which during the thirty-five years of their existence some 30,000 workmen have passed. Similar to the Workshops for Apprentices, in their objects and organisation, are the Schools of St Luke, founded by the Catholics, and possessing flourishing establishments at Ghent, Tournai, Liège, Brussels, Lille, and Courtrai.

Their object, according to their programme, is "to aid young people, and particularly the sons of artisans, in acquiring the theoretical and practical

knowledge necessary to make an honourable position; they tend to assure their superiority in the different callings of architect, contractor for public works, carpenter, cabinet-maker, sculptor in wood and stone, engraver, jeweller, &c."

The full period of study extends over ten years, but only those pupils who desire to become architects avail themselves of the complete course. Four or five years is considered sufficient to give a good education to artisans.

The instruction is gratuitous, and the schools rely chiefly upon the subscriptions of private individuals and on subsidies from the State and province. The success of these schools has been remarkable, and many of the pupils have gained considerable distinction in their various trades, not only in Belgium, but in France, Holland, and England as well.

Besides the Industrial Schools and the Workshops for Apprentices mentioned above, there exist many "Professional Courses" (as they are called) for the purpose of assisting workmen and others in learning the details of their trade or calling. Such are the École Professionnelle at Ghent and that of St Pierre at Louvain, the Schools for Tailors at Brussels and Liège, and those for fishermen at Blankenberghe and Ostend. In addition to these there is an admirable Brewing School at Ghent, founded under the auspices of the Society of Belgian Breweries. The limits of space, however, forbid me to do more than allude to these interesting institutions.

While ample provision has thus been made for the technical training of boys, it must not be supposed that their sisters have been lost sight of by those who have interested themselves in the work of education. "The Association for the Technical Instruction of Women" was formed in 1864 to improve the position of the workwoman, and to render her capable of obtaining a higher salary by her exertions than had hitherto been possible.

Some eighty-four persons undertook to subscribe 36 francs at least, for two years or more, while several gave more liberal donations. The Administration Communale of Brussels assisted the young institution with an annual gift of 3600 francs, and thus the school was commenced. M. Bischoffsheim, one of the founders, then provided for the furnishing of the new building, which was opened in the Rue du Marais in 1865. It remained a private institution till 1868, but was afterwards adopted as a communal institution by the town of Brussels, and received in addition a subsidy from the Government. Since that time many hundreds of girls have passed through the school, many of whom have received the diploma. The studies last for three years, and include not only a course of primary instruction but special and technical lessons adapted to the trade which the pupil is likely to follow.

The technical course comprises drawing, including a special class for the designing of lace, and various branches of painting on china, fans, and glass. In

addition to these, lessons are given in millinery and sewing, the making of artificial flowers, *lingerie*, and commerce.

As might be expected, the classes for dressmaking and millinery are the best attended, and also the most successful in their results; for while the work-rooms are practically self-supporting, dresses of the most finished description in point of style are turned out by the pupils, who have less difficulty in obtaining their livelihood on leaving the establishment than others who have not enjoyed the same advantages.

So, too, with the making of artificial flowers. The teacher finds the material, being repaid for the outlay by the sale of the pupils' work.

The commercial class teaches the different methods of book-keeping, as well as French, German, and commercial law. Pupils are admitted at the age of twelve, and pay a fee of 120 francs a-year. Those who have finished their studies obtain a Certificate of Capacity after undergoing a strict examination.

Every year there are exhibitions of work made in the school. These serve the double purpose of attracting the attention of the public to the Institution and of bringing the pupils in contact with visitors, who may afterwards bestow upon them their patronage. In addition to this the Council of Administration is in the habit of buying some of the best work every year, thereby giving rise to a healthy competition, and stimulating the pupil to further effort.

In 1889 the Council formed a society among the present and former pupils, known as the "Help Yourself Society." The object of this Association for Mutual Help is to render assistance to those of its members who are out of work or suffering from illness. It is assisted liberally by funds from the Council and friends, and has done much by its widespread utility to justify its existence.

Besides the building in the Rue du Marais, there is another in the Place de la Chapelle, at Brussels, which is not only a Technical School, but a School of Housekeeping as well.

A still larger Training School for girls is that in Rue du Poinçon, but the technical course is more ambitious and the fees somewhat higher in proportion. Schools of the same class exist in Antwerp, Ghent, Mons, and elsewhere, and in nearly all cases the expenses are met by assistance from the State and province and town, as well as by the subscriptions of private individuals and the fees of the students themselves.

Last, but assuredly not least, on the list of the so-called Professional Schools, are those which are termed "Schools of Household Management" (*Écoles Menagères*).

The first of these useful institutions was founded in 1872 by M. Smiets, the manager of a factory at Couillet. The Prince de Chimay, the Governor of Hainault, was so struck with the character of the undertaking that he started a school of the same

kind at Frameries under the direction of the village schoolmistress. This was so successful, that although originally intended for children leaving the classes of the Primary Schools, girls of eighteen and twenty, as well as married women, begged to be admitted to share in its advantages, and to gain some insight into those details of household management of which they had previously had little idea.

The Prince of Chimay was not long in following up his first success by the establishment of the "Schools of Housekeeping" in different parts of Hainault. These he maintained at first at his own expense, but later on, at his suggestion, they were brought under the supervision of the State, and having now become widely extended throughout the kingdom, form an excellent feature in the education of the younger working women of Belgium.

Before leaving the subject of education some allusion must be made to the admirable Musée Scolaire in the Parc Cinquantenaire at Brussels. Here collections of everything of interest to the educationalist are exposed to view: maps, books, school furniture, varied collections to serve as object-lessons in Primary Schools and Kindergartens, excellent dresses and other wearing apparel made by the elder girls, as well as programmes of study for the different grades of school, —all find a home under the roof of this well-arranged Museum.

Here, too, one remarks those strange pictures

with which the walls of Primary Schools in Belgium are only too elaborately decorated. The human form divine as exemplified in the half-clad figure, which represents the correct attitude in writing, may be well enough, but the picture of the deformed spine, supposed to be produced by an incorrect position, is unsightly and barbarous; while the same thing may be said of the realistic prints displayed at the instance of the "Society against Alcoholism." Whether the vivid delineation in bright colours of the diseased liver of the drunkard is really helpful in impressing the youthful mind with a due horror of the evils of intemperance is open to doubt. At all events, these praiseworthy efforts do not seem to have brought about as yet any great change in the amount of intoxicating liquors consumed in the kingdom.



A VILLAGE FOUNTAIN.



## THE BELGIAN MILITARY SYSTEM

THE Belgian army on a peace footing consists of 48,500 men. Of these, 1745 officers and 28,050 men belong to the infantry, who are divided into four divisions, containing nineteen regiments, the headquarters of the divisions being at Ghent, Antwerp, Liège, and Brussels. The two divisions of cavalry, whose headquarters are at Brussels and Ghent, include eight regiments, comprising 304 officers and 5760 men, together with 5500 horses.

The infantry is composed of five regiments of carabineers, one regiment of grenadiers, three of *chasseurs à pied*, and fourteen regiments of the line. The cavalry consists of two regiments of *chasseurs à cheval*, two of guides, and four regiments of lancers.

The two brigades of field-artillery at Brussels and Ghent comprise thirty active and eighteen other batteries; while the two brigades of fortress artillery at Antwerp and Namur are composed of fifty-eight active and twelve other batteries. The artillery consists of 534 officers, 8214 men, with 2582 horses and 204 guns.

The regiment of engineers at Antwerp supplies companies for the fortresses of Liège and Namur, the number of officers being 146 and that of the men 1703.

The Train, whose headquarters are also at Antwerp, consists of seven companies, with 29 officers and 455 men.

According to Mr Jerram's 'Armies of the World,' the estimated strength in time of war of the Belgian army was in 1899 about 145,000 men, the forces being recruited from the different classes of reserve. In addition to these, there is a corps of 2500 gendarmerie, together with hospital and veterinary departments, which seem to be fairly complete in the requirements of modern warfare.

The Belgian infantry are armed with the magazine rifle. The artillery at present are provided with Krupp field-guns, but it has recently been decided that these are no longer up to the level of the latest improvements, and the Nordenfeldt-Cockerill gun will be adopted instead.

Although a Belgian is not compelled by law to serve in the army, the method of obtaining recruits is not altogether voluntary, as in England. The young Belgian is required to draw lots for service when he has passed his nineteenth year, and in this way the requisite number of 12,000 or 13,000 recruits is obtained annually. Should he be so unfortunate as to draw an unlucky number, his parents or friends may come to his assistance by buying him off at a

price which is fixed yearly, but in no case is allowed to exceed the sum of £72. Once in the army, he is liable to serve for eight years; although, as a rule, about two years for infantry, and four for cavalry and field artillery, are considered sufficient. A month's leave is allowed him every year. No one is allowed to marry, or to hold any salaried post under Government, until he has furnished proofs of having satisfied the regulations concerning recruits.

If one may believe the newspapers, the season of drawing lots for recruits would seem to be marked by many scenes of violence and brutality. According to a table of events drawn up by M. E. F. de Ghélin in the 'Revue Générale' of the month following, this was especially the case in February 1898. The localities where the broils took place are in each case prefixed, and the list, according to M. Ghélin, was at the time of writing still incomplete; as it stands, however, it is worth quoting, as serving to show that some defect must exist in a system which permits such a state of things to be possible:—

Ingelmunster	An innkeeper assaulted and dying.
Ensival	Several Italian workmen grievously wounded.
Lauwe	A recruit receives numerous stabs with a knife.
Ardoye	Several quarrels. Two peasants stabbed and in danger of dying.
Swezezeele	Two young men frightfully wounded.
Malines	Stabs given in the faubourgs and Grande Place.

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Westerloo	A recruit fires his revolver at two persons, whom he wounds. A man who is stabbed dies immediately.
Mons	Quarrels. A young man grievously wounded.
Carnières	An old man nearly strangled.
Enghien	A man receives two dagger-thrusts.
Hérinnes	Pierre Cochez barbarously assassinated.
Wavre	Stabs. A recruit grievously wounded.
Bellem	<i>7th Feb.</i> —A recruit has to be knocked down by the landlord of a tavern.
Gilly	<i>8th Feb.</i> —Recruits attack a baker with bricks and injure him severely.
Zoersel	<i>The 10th or 11th.</i> —A constable knocked down.
Marcinelle	<i>The 12th.</i> —A young man stabbed, in a serious condition.
Florenville	<i>The 14th or 15th.</i> — Several recruits wounded, one very severely.
Charleroi	<i>The 14th.</i> —A passer-by attacked and left for dead.
Schaerbeek	<i>The 16th or 17th.</i> —A woman dangerously wounded.
Botteloere	<i>The 17th.</i> —A recruit stabbed.
Anvers	<i>The 19th.</i> —The police had to charge, several wounded.

It is certainly desirable that humanising influences should be brought to bear upon some of the youthful perpetrators of these and similar misdeeds. Fortunately this is done by those officers who have the wellbeing of their men at heart. General Marchal, for example, recently issued an order of the day, recommending his officers to receive the recruits with

kindness, and to exempt them at first from painful and fatiguing exercises. He also advised that they should be taken to visit the museums and places of interest, and that indoor recreation should be provided in the barracks, with the view of making the time pass pleasantly to the young soldiers. Further, he urged the officers to make friends with the men, to study their characters and temperaments, and not only to be patient themselves in dealing with clumsy and awkward recruits, but to reprimand any of the younger officers who might seem to be wanting in due consideration for those under their charge. Again, the colonel commanding the Grenadiers has recently given orders that all the men of the *levée* of 1899 are to be photographed in uniform at the expense of the regiment, and that three copies are to be given to each soldier to send home to his family.

Pensions are granted to Belgian soldiers on retiring from the army. These are of two kinds—*pensions de retraite* and *pensions de réforme*.

The *pensions de retraite*, or retiring pensions, are granted to soldiers of all ranks who have served for forty years and are fifty-five years of age, or who are debarred from following their profession by reason of wounds or other infirmity.

The *pension de réforme*, or discharge, is given to those under fifty-five years of age who are afflicted with wounds or infirmities which cannot be considered the result of their duties as soldiers, but proceed from



**AN ARDENNES LANDSCAPE.**  
From a painting by Hyppolyte Boulenger.

causes independent of their own will. Soldiers below the rank of officer have no claim to this pension unless they have served the number of years required by the law affecting recruits. The subjoined table indicates the pensions for the ranks of lieutenant-general (the highest rank), lieutenant-colonel, captain, sergeant-major, and private respectively.

	Minimum after thirty years' effective service.	Increase for each year's service.	Maximum at forty years' service.	Amputation of two limbs, or total loss of sight.	Amputation of one limb, absolute loss of use of two limbs, or infirmity equivalent to loss of limb.	Pensions to widows.
	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.
Lieut.-general	5625	187	7500	11,250	7500	3700
Lieut.-colonel	3000	100	4000	6,000	4000	1750
Captain	1875	62	2500	3,750	2500	1125
Sergeant-major	420	14	560	840	700	224
Private	274	7	342	513	480	132

It will be remarked that the soldiers of the highest rank, if we except the commander-in-chief, King Leopold, whose services are of an honorary character, receive the sum of 7500 francs as pension, equivalent to £300 of our money, or less than that awarded to a retired colonel in our own country; while the sergeant who has seen thirty years' service receives an annual dole of 420 francs, or £16, 16s. 4d.

Nor is the pay of the Belgian officer startling. A lieutenant-general receives 18,500 francs (£740), a major-general on the staff, 12,700 francs; those commanding a province, 10,160 francs; colonels, 9500 francs; lieutenant-colonels, 7100 francs; majors, 6300 francs; captain commandants, 5100 francs. An ordinary captain receives £160.

No wonder, therefore, that it is deemed desirable for the Belgian officer to marry money, and that the rich girls who receive their education in the convents of garrison towns, such as Bruges, should have little difficulty in securing an officer as husband. Before an officer is permitted to marry, however, he must comply with certain formalities. In the first place, the request for permission to marry must be addressed to the Minister of War and be submitted by him to the approval of the King. The certificates of birth of the two contracting parties must be produced. In addition to this, a declaration must be made by the civil authorities of the district in which the young lady dwells that both she and her parents enjoy the respect of the community. The declaration must also state whether the parents possess sufficient means to ensure the requisite income to the young couple, and whether, in the event of there being several children of the marriage, a similar provision is likely to be made for each of these separately. The lady is compelled to make a declaration that she will not follow her husband to the camp, and her parents must offer to pay immediately, or on demand, the capital



necessary to secure an annual income of £64, the least sum that a bride is permitted to bring to her husband.

An officer who desires to resign his commission is supposed to inform the War Office whether he is willing, if called upon, to place his services at the disposal of the department for a period of five years, and in the event of a future mobilisation of the forces to resume in the army the duties of the last rank which he occupied.

Military education is well cared for. There is a Council of Improvement, consisting of seven general officers and the commandant of the École de Guerre at Ixelles, through which those officers must pass who seek the diploma of adjutant on the staff; although sometimes, indeed, an equivalent examination is recognised instead.

The subjects taught in the École de Guerre are: the art of war, artillery, fortification, geology, general history, mathematics, astronomy and topography, military law, the English, Flemish, and German languages, and riding.

The École Militaire at Ixelles has a somewhat similar programme of study. Besides the two schools mentioned, there is the École d'Application for infantry at the camp at Beverloo, and a riding-school at Ypres, a school of artillery practice at Brasschaet, a school for cadets at Namur, an army orphan asylum at Alost, a gymnastic and fencing school at Etterbeck,

and various classes for the study of agriculture and forestry at Beverloo and elsewhere.

With regard to the courses in agriculture, an amusing tale is told of M. Gillekens, who was appointed recently to lecture on the subject to the garrison of Brussels. Owing to an oversight on the part of the authorities, only a small building had been provided for the occasion. M. Gillekens arrived, and so did the garrison—7000 in number. The lecture was not delivered. Orders were subsequently given that each regiment should receive instruction separately.

Although the Garde Civique does not form a portion of the army, it must, however, be taken into consideration when describing the military defences of Belgium. It is a constitutional institution which is active in all communes having a population of more than 10,000 souls, and also in others which are fortified, or are dominated by a fortress. Its duty is to watch over the maintenance of law and order, and to preserve the independence and integrity of the territory.

The mobilisation of the Garde Civique can only take place by virtue of a special law. In such a case the right of calling out the Garde Civique is vested in the hands of the mayor, the governor of the province, or the Minister of the Interior, as circumstances may require. All Belgians, and foreigners who have resided in Belgium for at least one year, are liable to be called upon to serve on such occasions, provided that their age falls within the limits assigned (twenty to

forty years of age), nor can they be exempted on any excuse save that of active military service.

A great deal of annoyance was caused in Belgium a short time ago by a foolish and ill-timed article which appeared in one of the minor English magazines, entitled "Armies that do not mean to fight." The writer criticised—and I think most unjustly—the general demeanour and appearance of the Belgian soldier. He prefaced his remarks by a cut at the Garde Civique: "I have been told by Belgians," he said, "that whenever any of the Civil Guard are sent out to keep the populace in order, it is found necessary to despatch an equal number of regulars to overawe the Civil Guard."

Before indorsing this condemnation of the Garde Civique one would do well to learn the names of his informants. Nor are his remarks about the regulars and their officers in better taste. Speaking of the latter, he says: "The officers, if anything, lack smartness even more than the men, and often present a truly laughable appearance. I noticed that the Belgian army possesses a very elaborate ambulance; and as no fighting is anticipated, I presume that this is a precaution lest any of the officers should happen to trip up over their swords." The writer's acquaintance with Belgian officers must be limited indeed! The impression made upon myself by the Belgian officers, and especially by those in the cavalry, is not one to justify such criticism.

As for the assertion that no fighting is anticipated,

it is difficult to see how any one who has studied political history, or travelled to any extent in Belgium, can fall into so obvious an error. Probably the mistake is due to the construction which the writer of the article would place upon the word "neutrality." For it is to this that he attributes the shortcomings of the Belgian army; and here, perhaps, some explanation may be necessary.

By the Treaty of London, in 1831, the plenipotentiaries of the five great Powers guaranteed the neutrality and independence of the country, and pointed out in addition that certain fortresses must be demolished and others be kept in a condition of efficient repair. It was in this way that the buffer State between England, France, and Germany sprang into being. But the word "neutrality" was held from the first to imply something much more than a state of passive non-resistance. Lord Palmerston, in a letter to M. Lebeau, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the subject of the treaty, wrote:—

"I have the honour to transmit to your Excellency a copy of the protocol of the conference of the 17th of April 1831, on the subject of the military system of Belgium in connection with her position as barrier for the other States."

Obviously, therefore, there was no intention of disarming Belgium while making her a neutral State. In 1840, when the possibility of a European war appeared upon the political horizon, the head of the French Government warned the King of the

Belgians that if Belgium did not put herself in a condition to defend her neutrality seriously, France would find herself obliged to occupy Belgian territory as soon as hostilities should be commenced.

So, too, in 1870 both France and Germany united in recommending Belgium to guard her frontiers on the east and south, declaring that this attitude alone could permit them to respect the neutral character of Belgian soil.

As M. Thonissen observes, the fact that the independence and neutrality of Belgium are guaranteed by treaty is an insufficient safeguard against the danger of foreign invasion. When the French army was repulsed in 1870 in the direction of the town of Sedan, the question was discussed in a council of war, presided over by the Emperor Napoleon, as to whether it would not be better to enter Belgium, in order to reach Lille by crossing the provinces of Namur and Hainault. This project, which would have brought the French and German armies into the heart of the neutral territory, was abandoned, because one of the most distinguished French generals exclaimed, "Invade Belgium! Why, in that case we should have to fight 70,000 more enemies!" No member of the council of war had taken it into his head to question the right of invading the territory of an independent and neutral country; only the timely presence of a large Belgian army on the frontier averted the threatened invasion of her soil. Before this, in 1855, Lord Palmerston had made a

significant reply in the House of Commons to a member who wished to save Turkey by declaring her perpetually neutral like Belgium :—

“I know that obligatory treaties have guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium, but I am not at all disposed to attach a great importance to declarations of this kind. The history of the world shows clearly that when a war arises, and one of the belligerent parties has an interest in throwing its army on to neutral soil, mere declarations of neutrality are never respected by themselves.”

This being the case, it is only reasonable to expect that Belgium should recognise the gravity of the situation, and by increasing her forces and defences render the violation of her territory a matter of even less probability in the future. Only as recently as December 1899, General Brialmont, the chief engineering expert in Belgium, gave it as his opinion that it was time that something should be done, and that during the last fifteen years the Clerical party, which had held the reins of Government, had sadly neglected measures for placing the country on a sound military footing. According to General Brialmont, the Belgian army of 145,000 men is quite inadequate ; for of these, only about 110,000 could really be relied upon in case of war, and after garrisoning the fortresses, 40,000 only would remain for duty on the frontier and in the interior. In a mountainous country such as Switzerland or the Transvaal this number might hold their own for a time, but on the

plains of Belgium they would be swept away at the first shock. He advocates, therefore, an army of 240,000 men at the least. Moreover, he points out that if at the end of a war Belgium became the property of France or Germany, she would be forced to furnish a contingent of 400,000 men, with a service of twenty-five years, instead of the shorter period now permitted.

The Belgians themselves, then, do not consider their army in the light of an expensive plaything, as the writer of the article from which I have quoted might lead some of his readers to imagine. If that were the case, it is difficult to see why the powerful fortifications of Antwerp, and the still more recent defences of Liège and Namur, should have been undertaken at all.

Antwerp, which in 1858 was adopted as the base of the defensive system of Belgium and the pivot of her active army, is one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, and would, it is said, require a force of at least 200,000 men to besiege it properly. The citadel and fort La Chartreuse at Liège protect communications by the Meuse valley; while Namur, commanding as it does the confluence of the Sambre and the Meuse, and being surrounded by an extensive circle of nine forts, should, notwithstanding the capabilities of modern artillery, prove a place of great importance. Undoubtedly these defences would be of great value in the event of an attack from the direction of the Moselle and Rhine, if Belgium

were called upon to repel the forces of a Teutonic invader.

What political changes affecting Belgium the next thirty years may have in store it is idle to surmise, nor have I any wish to forebode a radical alteration in the map of Europe. But the fact remains that the prosperity of Antwerp, and of Belgium generally, may one day excite the cupidity of her powerful neighbours, and should the predicted big European war ever become a reality, it is quite possible that Belgium, failing to preserve her neutrality and independence, would become the prey of one of the belligerents.

Let us hope, however, that neither Gaul nor Teuton will attempt to take forcible possession of her provinces, and that the common-sense of her people will never permit her to seek for annexation by France or any other Power whatever.



## THE BELGIAN ABROAD

**B**ELGIUM has the most crowded population in Europe. In proportion to its size it is three times as thickly populated as France; and, at its present rate of increase, by 1930 will contain ten millions of inhabitants. This being the case, we need not wonder that Belgium is eager to seize every opportunity of developing her rapidly expanding commerce, and of finding new fields of employment for her surplus masses. Recent statistics have shown that whereas formerly out of every 1000 Belgians thirty died annually, now, owing to improved sanitary conditions, the mortality has been reduced to less than twenty. Hence emigration must be looked upon as a matter not of option but of stern necessity. It cannot be said that the Belgians are slow to recognise the necessity which confronts them of seeking new outlets for the exports of the kingdom. The great financial success which since the opening of the Congo railway has attended their efforts to develop trade with the West Coast of Africa, the recent railway concessions in Egypt and China, and the prosperous issues of Belgian enter-

prises in Russia and elsewhere, have given a great impulse to emigration and colonial expansion in recent years.

In Russia and in China alone there seems to be unlimited scope for the investment of the overflowing capital of the little kingdom. From a recent consular report, issued by Prince Kondaschew, the First Secretary of Legation at the Russian embassy at Brussels, we learn that the amount of Belgian capital employed in developing the natural resources of the Russian empire, and invested in various industrial enterprises in that country, amounted in June 1897 to more than 7 million pounds sterling, and that since then it has risen to over 14 millions. The last sum represents the capital of 105 Belgian enterprises of different kinds, forty-three of them connected with the mining or metal industries, and sixteen of them tramway companies. In the other European countries the sums invested by Belgians are smaller; thus Austria - Hungary takes £130,000 of Belgian money, Spain £90,000, and Italy £120,000. As regards the profits of Belgian undertakings in Russia, we find that so far as concerns the fifty-three about which the necessary information exists, these may be fixed at above 14 million francs and the losses at 55,000 francs only.

The average gain on each enterprise was 272,864 francs, representing an average profit of 8 per cent on capital. The profits in 1897 on the tramways of Moscow were more than 1 million francs on a

capital of 5 millions; while the iron-works at Tula, which also were carried on by a Belgian company, produced a profit of nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million francs on an invested sum of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions. In 1898 an important firm at Verviers conveyed 200 glaziers with their families from Charleroi to a spot some sixty miles from St Petersburg, thus inaugurating a kind of Belgian colony on Russian soil.

Going still farther afield, we find that owing to the favourable impression made by King Leopold and his subjects on Li Hung Tchang during his recent visit to Europe, the Belgians have succeeded in obtaining the contract for the construction of a railway from Han-kou to Peking, and this, too, in the face of English, German, and American competition. As the material will be supplied from Belgium, at a cost of 150 million francs, it is evident that the small country succeeded in ingratiating itself with the astute Viceroy to some purpose.

Nor are the results which have been attained in Persia less encouraging to the Belgians. According to the 'Congo Belge' of May 1899, the little railway which places Teheran in communication with the famous place of pilgrimage of Shah - Abdul - Azim (where Nasser - el - Din was assassinated) is in the hands of a Brussels company, and it is from Belgium that the material of the railway is supplied. In addition to this, the same company has undertaken the monopoly of the little carriages of Teheran, as well as the working of the neighbouring stone

quarries. Nor is this all, for the telephone service also is under its charge, and to it belongs the exclusive privilege of providing for the lighting of the town, which is to be carried out by electricity.

In 1894 a company for the manufacture of sugar in Persia was founded at Brussels. It has established an important refinery at Kherizeh, near Teheran, which produces excellent sugar, and it has introduced the cultivation of beetroot into Persia. A company was started at Brussels in the same year which carries on successful glass-works in Persia by means of Belgian and native artisans.

It is not a little curious that the King of Siam should have intrusted the judicial reorganisation of his country exclusively to Belgians, ten of whom are now filling legal positions in that kingdom. The 'Times,' in its issue of April 4, 1899, remarking on this, observes:—

Belgian jurists sit at the Civil Tribunal, the Court of Appeal, and in the Privy Council. The inferior tribunals have also Belgian counsellors. In the International Court all arrears have disappeared. Causes are judged punctually. In the prisons in which persons arrested on suspicion are detained, there are no more than 300 prisoners, where formerly there used to be several thousands. The prisons are now administered by the Minister of Justice, and it is said that these are as well kept as those of the neighbouring English colonies. One cannot sufficiently praise the great Belgian jurist, M. Rolin-Jacquemyns, and his Belgian coadjutors, for the manner in which they have purified the administration of justice.

The administration has now attained at Bangkok, and to a lesser degree in the provinces, an efficiency which is astounding to those who remember the condition of things some years back. So rapid has been the progress that a foreign diplomatist affirms that the time is not far distant when the Siamese will be able, with as much reason as Japan, to claim the abolition of international jurisdiction. Even the remote and unsettled Philippine Islands have not escaped the notice of the Belgian capitalist. According to the 'Petit Bleu,' M. André, the Belgian consul at Manilla, stated recently in the course of an interview that the Americans were encouraging the investment of Belgian funds in the newly acquired islands, trusting that the example of the foreigner would be followed afterwards by a large number of the American capitalists themselves. M. André, it appeared, had been desired by a Belgian syndicate to ask for the concession of a line of railway to connect the north and south of the island, from Lucon to Manilla, traversing a distance of more than 1200 miles, in a country which possesses at present less than 100 miles of rail.

Least of all have the Belgians been idle in Egypt, where we should have expected English or French influence to have won the day. Two years ago an Egyptian railway accepted the tender of a Belgian firm for twenty locomotives, at the rate of £2173 per engine. The comment of the 'Egyptian Gazette' on this contract runs as follows:—

The administration is to be congratulated on this step, as locomotives are one of the weak points of the Egyptian railway system, and the insufficient number and condition of those now in use are frequently the reason of the unpunctuality of the passenger trains in this country.

Undoubtedly our own manufacturers should have something to say on this subject; or is it, as is so often alleged, that they do not keep themselves sufficiently well informed of the requirements of the markets of the world?

Oddly enough, this is exactly what M. Laurent Dechesne, in a recent article in the '*Revue de Belgique*,' urges against the Belgians themselves. He complains bitterly of the want of Belgian correspondents abroad who may inform their countrymen of any openings that offer for the introduction of commerce. He says nothing, however, of the existing Belgian commercial agencies in several large European towns, such as Bâle, Berlin, Elberfeld, and London, to which the merchant may address himself for information respecting custom dues, railway tariffs, and the like. He mentions that in 1898 the Consul-General of Belgium for Australia asked for Belgian representatives for his own country, such as those employed by their German rivals, and remarks that the same want is equally perceptible at Calcutta, where the Germans again appear to be well provided in this respect. But the same complaint is often made by our own consuls with regard to the apparent apathy and supineness of

our manufacturers. It is well known that the German needles obtained a footing on the Chinese market, not because they were better than the English, but solely because they were wrapped up in white paper, while the English were enveloped in black, which the Chinese regard as unlucky. But it is not only abroad that Belgium suffers from German competition. Antwerp is full of the subjects of the Kaiser, who exercise much influence on the commerce of the town, and may possibly constitute a political danger in the future.

One great difficulty which appears to beset the Belgian trader abroad is due to the fact that he is compelled to make use of foreigners as his commercial intermediaries. In this case, we are told, it too often happens that the Belgian goods are not pushed in the market under their own name, but as English or German wares. What truth there is in this statement I do not know; but it is quite possible that sometimes Verviers cloth or Liège hardware, when exported by a foreign firm, is incorrectly described by the trader. I fear, however, that Belgium is not the only country which suffers from this kind of thing, and that we too have our own complaints to make on the subject.

Sooner or later, too, a new trouble will arise, when the countries which have favoured the investment of Belgian capital begin to shirk the payment of interest and endeavour to release themselves



**EVENING.**

**From a painting by Hyppolyte Boulenger.**



from some of their obligations to the foreign capitalist. It is said that already there are indications of such a tendency in Russia, and that in many industrial centres there the outcry against the foreigner is supported by the press. The more enlightened journals, however, would seem to be aware of the fact that there can never be too much capital in a country of the size of Russia, and that the development of her vast natural resources, agricultural as well as mineral, to say nothing of her new railways, demands all the extraneous aid which may be forthcoming.

This difficulty to which I have alluded would not occur in the case of colonies, such as that of the Congo State, which form a definite portion of Belgian territory. To such prominence, indeed, has the Congo State attained within the last decade that some knowledge of its aims and progress is absolutely necessary for a clear comprehension of the present position and future prospects of Belgian commerce at home and abroad.

The Congo State is an extremely modern institution. Thirty years ago no one could have foreseen that Belgium would one day possess on the banks of the African river a country eighty times as large as herself. Still less could they have anticipated that before the close of the nineteenth century the bonds of the young State would be quoted on the Stock Exchange at a higher rate

than those of several European nations, and that the Congo Railway shares would within the short space of five years have increased to sevenfold their original value. Yet these things have happened; and that Belgium is enabled to start the new century with a possession so flourishing must be placed to the credit of King Leopold, who, in spite of the difficulties which for some time threatened the existence of his enterprise, has never despaired of the welfare of the State.

The Geographical Conference at the royal palace in Brussels in September 1876, under the presidency of the king, was the virtual commencement of the Congo Colony. The Great Powers—England, Germany, Austria, France, Italy, and Russia—were all represented by diplomatists and geographers of distinction. The object of the conference was to examine into matters relating to African exploration, while its result was the creation of the "International African Association," which received the mission "to explore scientifically the unknown parts of Africa, to facilitate the opening of routes by which civilisation might enter, and to seek out means of abolishing slavery."

Tropical Africa from the course of the Zambesi to the Egyptian Soudan was to be taken for the sphere of action, and committees were formed in several countries to further the objects of the association. None of these, however, seems to have

effected anything with the exception of the Belgian committee, which, supported by the exertions and liberality of King Leopold and others, was enabled to organise an expedition to Africa, under the command of Captain Crespel and Lieutenant Cambrier, with the object of exploring the country round Lake Tanganyika, and of putting down the slave-trade in that neighbourhood. Crespel and Dr Maes died of sunstroke soon after landing at Zanzibar in December 1877, but Lieutenant Cambrier succeeded in reaching the shores of Lake Tanganyika, where he founded the station of Karema.

In the meanwhile Stanley had made his celebrated journey across Africa, bringing with him to Europe much information regarding the upper portion of the Congo. King Leopold, anxious to make use of these discoveries, founded the Committee of Studies of the Upper Congo, with the special object of inquiring if there existed a practical means of establishing a regular communication between the Lower Congo and the upper courses of the river, and if it would be possible to bring about commercial relations with the natives of the Upper Congo. Stanley accepted the command of the expedition organised at the expense of the Committee of Studies, and arriving at the mouth of the Congo in August 1877, ascended the river with four small steamers. Founding a station at Vivi, he constructed a road through the mountains and established two new stations at Isan-

gila and Manyanga, and at length reached the plateau, where the river expands to form Stanley Pool. Here he founded in 1881 the station of Leopoldville, and then embarking on the *En Avant*, which had been launched on the Pool, continued to remount the Congo, establishing stations as he went, the last being that at the foot of Stanley Falls.

Throughout his journey he made treaties with the native chiefs, persuading them to recognise the sovereign rights of the International Association throughout their territories. In 1882 the Committee of Studies and International Association became amalgamated with the International Association of the Congo. In 1884 the Conference of Berlin met, under the presidency of Prince Bismarck, to decide upon the questions raised by the competition of the different European Powers in Western Africa. Fourteen Powers took part in its deliberations, which resulted in the recognition of the International Association of the Congo as a sovereign Power. Two years later, in July 1886, Sir Francis de Winton, at that time governor of the country, proclaimed King Leopold "Sovereign of the Congo" at Boma, thus bringing the State still more closely into connection with the parent kingdom.

The administration of the Congo State is placed under a dual *régime*, consisting of the central authority at Brussels and a local government upon the Congo. The central government is directed by a

secretary of state, assisted by a chief of the Cabinet, three secretaries-general, and a treasurer. The local government has its seat at Boma, on the Lower Congo. It is placed under the direction of a governor-general, who represents the King of the Belgians in Africa. The governor-general is assisted by a deputy-governor, state inspectors, a secretary of state, and managing directors, all of whom are appointed by the king. Should circumstances arise demanding immediate action, the governor-general possesses the power of deciding upon matters of importance at a moment's notice, subject to the subsequent approval of the sovereign.

An executive council, under the presidency of the governor-general at Boma, concerns itself with all measures affecting the interests of the State, occasionally inviting native chiefs to take a part in its deliberations, especially when these have to deal with matters connected with the welfare of the black portion of the community.

The judicial system in the Congo State appears to be very complete in its organisation. There is a "tribunal of first instance" at Boma, adjudicating in all civil cases in which a white man or the State is the party concerned; civil suits between natives fall under the sphere of native jurisdiction. There is also a court of appeal composed of a president and two judges. Besides these, there are ten territorial tribunals, to each of which a deputy of the attorney-

general is attached. These are situated in the large towns, such as Boma, Leopoldville, and Stanley Falls.

A superior council, whose seat is at Brussels, performs the duties of a *cour de cassation* and court of appeal, while the councils of war are concerned with offences committed by soldiers alone. According to M. Lallemand, in his work on the Congo, the judicial authorities are not supposed to intervene as a rule in matters affecting the natives, save in cases where human sacrifices, cannibalism, or other practices at variance with the laws of civilisation are in vogue. Matters affecting natives are referred to their own chiefs; but this notwithstanding, the blacks are gradually adopting the custom of resorting to the Belgian tribunals.

The law of the Congo State is explicit in forbidding all traffic with the natives in alcohol and firearms, trials by ordeal (so common in the fetish rites of the West Coast), human sacrifices, the slave-trade, and everything else which may militate against the well-being of those under the protection of the Belgian flag. The punishments recognised by the Congo code are imprisonment, fines, penal servitude, confiscation of goods, and death. The extreme punishment is carried out by means of hanging, but soldiers are shot. It is said that except in the case of Stokes, who was, as we remember, hanged on insufficient evidence and without a regular trial, on the charge

of selling firearms to the natives, and of the Arab chiefs Sefu and Muini-Mohara, shot for treason, there have been, at all events till recently, two instances only of the infliction of capital punishment in the Congo State. One of these was for assassination, the other for causing death by submitting a person to the ordeal of drinking a beverage which contained poison. Those condemned to penal servitude are shut up in a prison at Boma, or employed as convicts in the public works.

Formerly the Congo State recruited its troops exclusively from different African races, such as the Houssas, and the natives of Senegal and of Zanzibar. In 1891, however, a change was made, and the recruits are now raised by annual levies within the territory of the State itself. All subjects from fourteen to thirty years of age are liable to military service; besides which, voluntary engagements are permitted. In 1897 the Congo troops, which owing to the slave-trade difficulties had been considerably increased, amounted to 8000 soldiers, together with 4000 native and 2000 foreign volunteers. These consisted of companies commanded by Belgian officers and non-commissioned officers, and were divided, as circumstances required, among the different districts of the State. Each company has a complement of 100 to 150 men, or, if reinforced to its full strength, of 200 to 250.

They are divided into two divisions, with four



**A BELGIAN LANDSCAPE.**

**From an etching by Hyppolyte Boulenger.**



sections and eight squads, the squads being commanded by native sergeants and corporals. The duration of service is five years, with two years in the reserve. The regulars receive 21 centimes a-day; the volunteers the sum specified in their contract. The whole force is placed under the command of the governor-general, and administered by the commandant, who resides with his staff at Boma. The uniform of a Congo soldier consists of a jersey of blue cloth trimmed with red, trousers of the same material, with a belt and fez of red serge. The weapon is the Albini rifle.

The whites are armed with the Mauser rifle and a revolver. The artillery employed are Nordenfeldts constructed by the Société Cockerill, and Maxim guns. There are also twelve Krupp guns and some large cannon for the defence of Fort Shinkakassa, near Boma.

The law with regard to landed property in the Congo State is based on the principle that all vacant and ownerless land belongs to the Government, and that, consequently, no one can occupy or possess this without a definite legal title. Private individuals or commercial companies who possessed property or occupied land at the time of the foundation of the Congo State are required to make a declaration, and to submit to the approval of the Government any title-deeds upon which their claims may be based. Moreover, with the object of guaranteeing to the

natives the possession of the lands which they occupy, no transaction made with them is recognised by the State unless it has been made through the intervention of the Government agents appointed for this purpose.

The registration of lands sold by the State or to the State is placed in the hands of an agent whose offices are at Boma. Not infrequently free grants of land are made by the State on condition that the recipient brings his property under cultivation.

As many charges have been brought against the Belgians from time to time with regard to their treatment of the foreigners in their service on the Congo, and also with reference to asserted cruelty towards the natives, I may be excused, perhaps, if I quote a letter on this subject which appeared in the 'Times Weekly' during August 1899. The writer, it will be observed, is an Englishman in the employ of the Congo State. I quote the letter verbatim, omitting the name of the gentleman whose letter called forth the reply:—

SIR,—I have just received my copy of the 'Times Weekly' edition of June 2nd, and have read with much surprise the statement made to Reuter's by Lieutenant A., late of the Congo Force Publique. As an Englishman, also in the Congo State service, I shall be glad if you will give the following remarks the same publicity as those of my fellow-countryman.

Mr A. states "that perpetual warfare reigns between Leopoldville and Tanganyika." I think he will find this statement difficult to substantiate, the only military expeditions between these two points being in Bangala, and the Batetela revolt between Nyangwe and the southern portion of the lake [Tanganyika]. There are occasional punitive or "rubber palavers," but the statement that there is perpetual warfare is too strong an expression.

It is certainly an exaggeration to say that in the four districts named it is unsafe to penetrate a mile from the river. It may be true of some few places, but these are not numerous. As regards the statement that "even in the case of steamers tying up for the night to cut wood, the native crews sent ashore for this purpose are frequently fallen upon and speared," all I can say is that the very opposite is far more likely to happen. That it has happened is true, but the last incident of this sort occurred more than two years ago.

*Re* the five wood posts seen burning: somebody has been yarning pretty badly.

As to the remark that "foreigners are treated more like cattle than anything else," my experience has been exactly the opposite, although I will not deny that in one or two instances I have received anything but courteous treatment, but on these occasions Belgian officers suffered the same.

*Re* "no quarters being prepared for new arrivals," this remark may apply to Boma, where one stays a few days only at the most, or it may apply to up-country stations, where a man usually goes to take over another man's post, in which case it is obviously incorrect.

Concerning the remarks as to food arrangements, these are very misleading and require some explanation. I quite

agree with Mr A. that the food arrangements leave much to be desired ; in fact, in a few places I have been to, they are extremely unsatisfactory. But one might infer that it was particularly the foreigners who are thus treated, whereas the places where I have found the food to be the worst have been commanded by Belgian officers.

Whether King Leopold makes personal appeals to regiments to supply officers for service here I am not in a position to say.

As to the statement that many "parts" of the Congo are in charge of non-coms., it is true there are small "posts" in charge of these men, but all important places are in charge of officers. "Parts" is a misleading word : it might mean a whole zone.

*Re* the barbarities : Mr A. gives no facts in support of this statement. I have had the opportunity of consulting a number of missionaries, who agree that in this respect a great improvement has taken place recently. In conclusion, I would remark that Mr A. has only been in the State about six months, and when here, remained in his district the whole of that time. I believe I am correct in saying that he was only able to perform about two months' active service, owing to his unfortunate illness ; therefore most of his statements must be from hearsay, although I can quite believe that they were made in good faith.

Personally, I believe the Government is doing its best to better the condition of its officers ; new steamers are being built as quickly as possible, thus making transport, at present the great difficulty, easier. The railway is earning considerably over a million francs per month, gross receipts, and by the end of this year one will be able to telegraph from Boma to the Equator.

STANLEY POOL, *July 6th.*

With reference to the statement about officers in the letter just quoted, it certainly does appear, if one may judge by what one reads in the Belgian newspapers, that the Congo service is less popular with them than was the case some years ago. They leave their posts, it is said, in order to enter the service of private companies, or to return to their regiments.

Their condition and pay as compared with those of colonial troops of other nations are somewhat unsatisfactory. On their first departure for the Congo they receive their regimental pay, with an addition of £80. Afterwards a bargain is made with them which is not always to their liking.

Now at Batavia, in the East Indies, a third-class clerk receives £150 to commence with. A German captain's pay in the African colonies is £480, that of a superior officer £600, while a sergeant in the same force obtains £138, and a corporal £120. A sergeant-major on the Congo would receive no more than £76 a-year, while a sergeant would obtain £60, or not half the salary of the German non-commissioned officer of the same rank.

There exists, therefore, a pecuniary grievance, which will probably diminish in proportion as the prosperity of the State tends to become permanent.

Owing to the cataracts, which present an insurmountable obstacle to the navigation of the river, a railway in the new State was a matter not so

much of choice as of necessity. Quite at the commencement of the colony Stanley wrote, "Without a railway the Congo is not worth a shilling, with a railway it is worth millions." An English syndicate was formed at Manchester in 1885 to obtain the concession of the new works, but the negotiations fell through, and a Belgian company was permitted to inaugurate the enterprise. The work was begun in March 1890 and completed eight years later, in March 1898. The line starts from Matadi, and ends at Dolo, above Leopoldville. Its length is 240 miles. Few believed in the undertaking, while at first fewer still were willing to help it financially. But those who retained their shares when things looked gloomy have deservedly reaped a golden harvest.

The ordinary shares, which in 1893 were quoted on the Bourse at 325, were worth 1170 five years later, while the founder's shares had risen in the same period from 275 to 1925. And no wonder, for long before the railway had reached its complete limit the money was pouring into its coffers with amazing rapidity. In 1894 the receipts amounted to 53,367 francs, while in 1897 they had reached 3,405,627 francs. In July 1899 alone the sum received was as much as 790,000 francs. This success is greatly due to the efforts of Lieutenant-Colonel Thys, the director-general, through whose initiative the company was founded.

Owing to the ants, whose destructive propensities in tropical Africa are well known, and the fear that wood might dry and split easily, the sleepers over which the lines run are made of metal. There are more than one hundred bridges, most of them of steel. These were made in Belgium, and then sent out in pieces to the Congo. As might be expected, the construction of the Congo Railway has given bread to large numbers of metal-workers in Belgium itself, thereby affording testimony, if further proof were needed, of the value of the colony to the mother country.

Of course the health of a country is a most important factor in its prosperity, and in this respect the Congo, in common with the rest of the West Coast of Africa, is at a disadvantage. Without taking account of the natives, who frequently are decimated by the smallpox (although, as vaccination is now compulsory, the bad effects of the malady are gradually becoming less apparent), it is impossible to say that the climate is attractive to Europeans.

According to Dr Firkel of Liège, the average mortality amongst the European agents of the State between the years 1890 and 1896 was 50 per thousand, including deaths from accident, enemy's fire, and other causes which could not be assigned to the climate. With the object of showing the influence of circumstances upon the

rate of mortality, he divides the agents into three classes :—

1. Those of the interior, employed in expeditions and outpost duties, whose work is not compatible with comfort. Among these the mortality was as high as 60 per thousand.

2. The railway employés, navvies, &c., whose work is carried on under rather easier circumstances. Their mortality is 52 per thousand.

3. Those occupied in the financial department, and residing in the stations, under comfortable conditions as to both life and food. Among this class the death-rate was much lower, being only 35 per thousand, or very little more than the rate of mortality for Brussels between 1864-73.

A great deal is being done to improve the health of the European community, and to enable those stricken by fever to recover their health speedily. Dr Descamps has recently been sent by the king to Las Palmas, to take steps for the erection of a sanatorium for those invalided from the Congo.

I have already alluded to the advantages gained by the Belgian iron-masters who have supplied materials for the construction of the railway. But these are but a portion of those who benefit by this outlet for Belgian commerce. For example, the cloth fabrics mostly come from the mother country. Cotton goods are supplied by the looms of Ghent, St Nicolas, and Bornhem, linen cloth by those of Ghent and Courtrai.



The blankets are manufactured at Brussels and Termonde, and the fezzes at Verviers. Brussels supplies the outfit for the agents of the State, while Liège and Namur send their stores of hardware and cutlery to find a ready market among the natives of the interior.

Until recently, commercial transactions on the Congo were mainly carried on by a system of barter, but this is gradually giving way before the adoption of a regular coinage, duly stamped with the effigy of King Leopold and the arms of the Congo State. The appropriate motto, *Travail et Progrès*, also finds a place on the coins, which are practically identical with those of Belgium itself. In order to prevent difficulties from arising with the natives, the importation of firearms and ammunition is forbidden by law, while the very heavy duty imposed upon alcohol has had the effect in a marked degree of diminishing its sale. The chief competitor whom Belgium has to face in her Congo trade is England. Germany and Holland come next after a long interval.

According to the latest official report, the exports of the Congo State for the year 1898 amounted to 22,163,484 francs, and the imports to 23,084,446, the increase of exports being 46 per cent as compared with those of the year 1897, and making an increase of 750 per cent on the value of the goods exported in 1888.

This increase of exports during these ten years is due mainly to the greater value shown by the traffic in rubber. The plant is found almost everywhere in the Congo and needs no cultivation. According to Stanley, the value of the rubber in the forest of the Aruwimi will do more than cover the cost of construction of the Congo Railway. In 1888 the value of the rubber exported was declared to be 260,000 francs; in 1898 it was 15,850,000 francs. Nearly all of this was exported to Antwerp. Other exports for the same year were ivory, 4,319,260 francs; cocoanuts, 1,279,768; kola, 1,381,250 francs; and palm-oil.

It is curious that the bulk of the ivory now finds a market at Antwerp, instead of at London or Liverpool as formerly. Coffee is being grown in the Congo State with a success which augurs well for the future. It is also proposed to introduce the cultivation of tobacco.

It is sometimes urged, although less frequently now than formerly was the case, that the Belgians spend money upon the Congo State which would have found a better investment otherwise. Since the foundation of the State, however, less than 100 million francs have been devoted to this purpose, or about half of what the Belgian workman spends in *petits verres* or *pecqués* in the course of the year.

In 1898 the treasurer of Belgium spent 422 million

francs, of which sum only 2 millions were devoted to the Congo. The railway is a splendid success, of course, its profits already passing the sum of 3 million pounds. The Belgian treasury lent 25 million francs to the Congo State between the years 1890 and 1900, in return for which Belgium acquired the right of ultimately taking possession of this large country, with all its natural wealth and resources. In 1889 King Leopold inserted a clause in his will by which he left to Belgium all his sovereign rights over the Congo State. This will was made known to the Houses of Representatives in July 1890. At the same time, it was decided that the Houses should be summoned in 1900 to discuss the question of the resumption of the Congo by the mother country. This, then, is the momentous question which will shortly be placed before the legislative bodies of the kingdom in the course of the present year.<sup>1</sup>

Some interesting details with regard to the trade of Belgium with our own country are to be found in the British consul's report for 1899. From this it appears that the exports in that year from Belgium to the United Kingdom amounted in value to 14 millions, as against imports to the amount of somewhat more than 12 million pounds sterling. The largest British export to Belgium, oddly enough,

<sup>1</sup> It has since been decided that no alteration shall be made until the year 1910.

was that of diamonds, which represented about one-fifth of the total trade to that country; the items next of importance were resin and bitumen. The chief articles which we receive from Belgium are silk and cotton manufactures and glass-ware.

A singular result of the present war in the Transvaal has been the scarcity of coal, which at one time affected the railways and factories of Belgium to a serious degree. A strike of Belgian miners occurring about the time of the outbreak of hostilities placed the owners of works in the awkward position of being unable to procure coal either at home or in England.

The chief rivals of Great Britain in her trade with Belgium are France, Germany, and the United States of America. Of these, France exports to Belgium more than 15 million pounds worth of goods, the United Kingdom 12 millions, and Germany and the United States somewhat less. Enough has been said to indicate that Belgium is likely to prove a formidable rival in the markets of the world to any Power which is not provided with plenty of capital and a large fleet of merchant vessels, by means of which she may undertake her own carrying-trade; and it is precisely in this latter point that the weakness of Belgium herself is most apparent.

This has been noticed recently by M. Lecoq, who, in drawing a comparison between the commerce of England and Belgium, remarks that the

trade of the former is eight times as large as that of his own country, and that the number of ships possessed by Belgium being far too small, forces her to depend on her neighbours for the carrying of her goods, whereby she is compelled to pay an increased freight, to the profit of her rivals.

He quotes, in support of his statement, a list of the vessels sailing under the Belgian flag and having Antwerp as port. These are fifty-seven in number, with a tonnage of 88,444 tons. They include, among others, the vessels of the well-known Société Cockerill, the Société anonyme Belge - Americaine, the Compagnie Belge du Congo, and other companies. And yet out of this list of two sailing-vessels and fifty-five steamers, only five companies and seventeen steamers are really Belgian in respect of capital and crew. The other vessels are manned by English and German sailors, while out of 2101 men who embark at the port of Antwerp, 721 only are natives of Belgium. Nor is this all, for of these fifty-five steamers nine only were built in Belgium, and these by the Société Cockerill for its own sea-traffic. Another fact, pointing to the same conclusion, is that at Antwerp out of sixty-five shipping offices only thirty-one are Belgian or even partly Belgian.

These are matters, however, which are likely to receive attention in the immediate future; and although it is improbable that a navy in the strict

acceptation of the term will ever form a portion of the defensive organisation of Belgium, it is likely that greater efforts will be made to enable the country to increase her expanding commerce further by means of that efficient mercantile marine of whose assistance she at present stands so much in need.

REMARKS ON THE 'HISTORY OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN BELGIUM, 1883-1900.' BY A BELGIAN BARRISTER

**I**N 1883 the Liberal party were still in power, and had the disposal in the *Chambre de Députés* of 79 seats out of 138. The 59 remaining seats were occupied by the Catholics. Although at that time democratic ideas were beginning to gain ground, there was as yet no organised Socialist party, at any-rate its representatives had not yet gained admission to the Chamber. The right of suffrage was only exercised by some 130,000 citizens, paying to the State 42 francs, 32 centimes in direct taxes. Thus the 'History of the Political Parties' dealt only with the conflicts between those having the franchise, and depended on the alternate preponderance of Liberals or Catholics.

The Advanced Liberals (Radicals), or "Progressistes," demanded, in 1883, universal suffrage and the revision of article 47 of the Constitution, which determines the property qualifications of the elector. This proposal was rejected by a very large majority. The considerable expenditure incurred by

the Liberals in constructing schools had brought about a deficit of 3 million francs, and had rendered necessary the imposition of new taxes.

On the other hand, the Liberal Ministry of M. Frère-Orban proposed to increase the army by a reserve of 30,000 men. The Catholics, taking advantage of these circumstances, brought over to their side the mass of wavering electors, which frequently decides the fate of an election. The Liberal party was thus divided into two factions. The Catholics presented themselves at Brussels under the name of "Independents," announcing that they would put aside all party quarrels and only concern themselves with the interests of the country. These tactics succeeded. The elections of June 1884 gave to the Clerical or Catholic party 86 seats in the *Chambre de Députés*, while the Liberals only succeeded in retaining 52. In the election for the Senate the Clericals obtained a majority of 17. The sixteen years which have elapsed since that time have marked a period of domination for the Clerical party. The Liberals, still divided, saw their situation become still worse at the following elections. In 1886 they lost 13 seats, so that their number in the *Chambre* amounted to no more than 39 as against 99 Catholics. Their hopes of revenge were still more cruelly deceived in 1888. The Radicals, at the ballot which took place in Brussels, refused to desist in favour of the Moderate Liberals, and the Clerical candidates with one exception were



elected. Thus the Liberals, who at the commencement of the Catholic ascendancy had shown an extreme vitality in organising an imposing demonstration (September 1884) to protest against the Educational Bill passed by the Catholic party, finished by falling into a condition of profound dejection.

During this time the Democratic or Socialistic party was growing in the shade, organising itself, and acquiring fresh strength daily. The first reform which it advocated was the introduction of universal suffrage. Threatening strikes in 1886, and an imposing demonstration at Brussels on the part of the working classes on the 15th of August in the same year, made people understand that they must shortly give way to what was demanded of them.

M. Beernaert (who was Prime Minister from October 1884 to 1894) in vain attempted to throw discredit upon the new party. In 1890 a proposal of M. Janson, the Progressiste leader, in favour of the revision of the electoral law, received the consideration of the Government. It may be said that from that time to the present moment the electoral question in Belgium has taken the precedence of all others. The Catholic Ministry endeavoured to prolong matters. At length in 1892 the Chambers were dissolved and entirely renewed, with a view to the revision of the Constitution. Thanks to the union of the two factions of the Liberal party, the Catholics, although they preserved their majority, did not

obtain three-quarters of the votes, which were necessary to make the revision turn out profitable to themselves. There were in the Chamber 92 Catholics to 60 Liberals, and in the Senate 46 Catholics to 30 Liberals (the number of Representatives and Senators had been brought respectively to 152 and 76).

The transactions of the Legislature were extremely confused. At length on the 12th of April 1893 all the proposals connected with the revision, including universal suffrage, were successively rejected by the Chamber. Grave troubles arose in Brussels, and it was under the influence of fear and to appease an imminent revolution that the Chamber hastily voted the system which is now actually in force, and which is "universal suffrage" mitigated by the plural vote. The revised articles of the Constitution were sanctioned by the king on the 7th of September 1893. M. Beernaert wished to introduce into our electoral legislation the principle of popular representation, but the most uncompromising of the Catholics, directed by M. Woeste, brought about the failure of the project. M. Beernaert retired in March 1894. M. de Burlet replaced him at the head of the Catholic Cabinet.

The first experience of the new electoral system was made in October 1894. One million three hundred and fifty-one thousand nine hundred electors were now able to vote. The result was a considerable Clerical majority. The Catholics had 105 seats

out of 152. A new party, the Socialist party, now represented for the first time, obtained 29 seats. The Liberals had no more than 18, all or almost all occupied by members of the Progressive party. The Moderate Liberals were excluded from Parliament.

These results, so deplorable for the advanced parties, must be attributed in a great measure to the fear exercised on the upper and middle classes by the doctrine of collectivism promulgated by the Socialists. The Clerical domination received a fresh impulse. Since 1884 they have (according to their opponents) injured the course of secular public instruction and done harm to the schools, while the churches and convents, on the other hand, have prospered. They have appointed Catholics to almost all the posts in the administration and magistracy at their disposal; but as the country enjoys great material prosperity, the majority of Belgians do not complain of the Catholic Government.

The partial elections of 1896 further reinforced the Catholic majority, which was brought up to the number of 111 seats; the Liberals (Progressive party) had only 12 seats. The Socialists retained their 29 seats. This situation was explained by the fear, still greater than before, which the violent language employed by the Socialists in Parliament inspired in the governing classes, and also because the Liberals refused to ally themselves with the Socialists to defeat the Catholics at Brussels, Antwerp, &c. It is certain that a great number of

Liberals voted for the Catholics. However, when a comparison was made between the number of Liberal votes and the number of representatives, it became evident that there was no proportion between their strength in Parliament and their strength in the country. The system of counting majorities exaggerated the power of the Catholics, and the Liberals, under pain of seeing themselves deprived for ever of their proper influence, were forced to ally themselves with the Socialists in order to overthrow or weaken considerably the Catholic Ministry.

However, the alliance between the Liberals and Socialists was not made at the time of the elections of 1898, the necessary consequence of which was the reinforcement of the Catholics, who numbered 112 in the Chamber, against 28 Socialists and 12 Liberals. The Liberals were now in despair. The agitation in favour of popular representation had not been abandoned by M. Beernaert and his partisans, notably M. Vandervelde, the Socialist leader, and M. Lorand, the Liberal leader. Certain annoying measures undertaken by the Catholic Ministry exasperated the Liberals. Their hatred against the Catholics was still further excited by the revolting spectacle of the Dreyfus case in France—so much so that in December 1898 a fatal result came to pass which had been for a long time preparing. The chiefs of the Socialist, Progressive, and Moderate Liberal parties concluded an arrangement with a

view to obtaining both popular representation and universal suffrage. It seems probable that if the elections of 1900 had taken place under these conditions, they would have brought about the fall of the Catholic party. Thus opened the year 1899, which must be regarded as one of the most important in the internal political history of Belgium.

The Catholic Ministry at once understood the danger which threatened it. It was decided that a new electoral law should be voted to hinder the alliance of the parties of the Opposition. One party of the Catholics, directed by M. Woeste, who exercised an immense influence on the Right, did not wish for popular representation, as this system would naturally cause a large number of deputies to lose their seats.

M. de Smet, Prime Minister since 1896, and partisan of popular representation, gave in his resignation on the 23rd of January 1899; M. Vandenpeereboom, already Minister of Railways and Minister of War, became head of the Cabinet. He elaborated and introduced with his colleagues a project proposing popular representation in the large arrondissements (especially the large towns, which are Liberal), and leaving the old system by majorities in the small rural arrondissements, where the Catholics are the masters.

It is easy to see that the passing of this partial Act would have been a party measure assuring the supremacy of the Clericals for ever. M. Woeste,

however, though a Catholic, refused to admit the system of popular representation into any measure, however small. He warmly praised the uninominal system, which consisted in cutting up the country into 152 arrondissements, each electing one representative.

The Socialists and the Liberals, being of the same mind, held meetings in common, and organised in concert a general resistance to the project of the Government.

M. Woeste himself was their most powerful ally, declaring in an interview that the measure of the Government was "indefensible." However, M. Vandenpeereboom still supported his project, and hoped to secure its passage through the House.

This attitude provoked violent public indignation. Grave troubles broke out at Brussels, especially on the 28th, 29th, and 30th of June. Noisy demonstrations took place every evening for three days in the capital, in which the Liberals took part along with the Socialists. Cries of "Vive la République!" burst forth on all sides, and for a moment a revolution seemed possible. At length, at the moment when the situation was extremely strained, a Moderate Catholic, M. Ehivdor, proposed to unite a Commission in which the three parties in the House would be represented, and which would be charged with examining the different measures proposed, and especially that of M. Vandenpeereboom. It was condemned in advance, and on the 1st of

August M. Vandenpeereboom resigned. M. de Smet became Prime Minister once more, and presented to the House the outline of a law clearly instituting proportional representation. This project was favourably received by the Moderate Catholics.

As for the uncompromising section of the Catholics, these made a violent opposition to the measure, M. Woeste predicting the utter ruin of the Catholic party.

The Socialists and the Progressive party ought to have regarded the proposal with favour, but the alliance which they had contracted with the Liberals in December 1898 had been made with the view of obtaining both popular representation and universal suffrage. During these troubles they might have expected to see the fall of the Ministry and the realisation of the double programme. The Government proposal, however, satisfied the country. The Socialists, being deceived, accused the Liberals of having failed to fulfil their portion of the compact. On the other hand, several of the Socialists were opposed to proportional representation. A certain number of these attempted to hinder the taking of the vote by means of obstruction.

These tactics, disapproved of by the other Socialists and by the Progressive chief, M. Lorand, did not find an echo in the country. The measure, after long and laborious discussion, was passed by the two Houses, and received the assent of the sovereign.

It is impossible to predict with certainty the result of the next elections, which will take place in May 1900.<sup>1</sup> The Catholics are shaken and divided, but it is probable that they will retain a weak majority in Parliament, and that the Ministry, instead of having an extreme Clerical tendency, as has previously been the case, will reflect the aspirations of the Moderate Catholic party. It is high time that the Clerical system of politics, whose principles have been applied in Belgium without obstacle during the last sixteen years, and which are so fatal to the progress of public education, should speedily come to an end.

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written the general election under the new system at the end of May 1900 has resulted in the return to the Chamber of

	Number.
Catholics . . .	85
Liberals . . .	33
Socialists . . .	33
Christian Democrat . . .	1

The new system, therefore, whilst still leaving the Catholics a majority, has reduced it to 18, and has enabled the Liberals to gain 21 seats and the Socialists 5. The Senate is now composed of 58 Catholics and 44 Liberals and Socialists. According to the registers there are at present in Belgium 1,452,232 electors, disposing of 2,239,621 votes. All electors are compelled by law to record their votes.



## NOTE

CONDITIONS REQUIRED OF ELECTORS FOR THE  
CHAMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

1. All male Belgians of twenty-five years of age at the least, who have been domiciled for at least a year in the same commune, and who do not find themselves within the scope of one of the cases of exclusion foreseen by law, have a vote.

2. Under certain conditions these same Belgians may have one or more supplementary votes, but no individual may have more than three votes.

A. These have *one* supplementary vote :—

(a) Electors of from thirty-five years of age, provided they are married or widowers, and that they pay to the State at least 5 francs personal contribution on buildings occupied by them (unless on account of their profession they are exempted from this contribution). This is the supplementary vote of fathers of families.

(b) Electors of twenty-five years of age, who are owners of immovable property worth 2000 francs (£80) at least, or who have had their names inscribed for at least two years in the great Book of the Public Debt, or in a Belgian State Savings Bank, as possessing the amount of 100 francs' income. The wife's property is in this case counted with the husband's, and the children's with that of the father.

B. These have *two* supplementary votes :—

(a) The bearers of a diploma for Higher Education, or of a certificate for Middle Education.

(b) Those who fill or have filled one of certain positions, or who have exercised one of certain professions enumerated by the law.

The Senators are elected on the same conditions, except that the elector must be thirty years old at least.

## A CHAPTER OF FOLK-LORE

THE study of the popular beliefs which colour so much the lives of country-people, and often exercise an important bearing on their actions, is not wholly void of interest even at the beginning of the new century; and a chapter on the folk-lore of the Walloon and Flemish provinces of Belgium, therefore, may prove not uninteresting.

In the Walloon district there are many curious customs connected with the Calendar. At Liége, for example, on the 1st of January the workmen's children run about in bands from morning to night, ringing at all the doors and begging the passers-by to offer them *nul*, and wishing them "A good year and good health." The *nul* are wafers rather larger than a 5-franc piece, and stamped with the figure of a crucifix. People nearly always give some small coin to the children; and many fasten the wafer as a kind of charm above and inside the door of the house, or room, which they inhabit. Again, a young girl must ask the first little boy who wishes her a happy new year his Christian name—for that is the name which her future husband will bear.

In the villages to the east of the province of Liège, on Twelfth Night, the children and young people beg at the doors, repeating little rhymes adapted to the occasion. They sup on the proceeds. Connected with the Epiphany is the belief that he who has eaten a piece of the middle of a Twelfth cake will have no stomach-ache during the year.

On Shrove Tuesday the children of Hesbaye go from door to door singing songs of the same kind as those sung on Twelfth Night. They are given apples and nuts, as well as pieces of bacon which they spit on long willow wands. A little fire is lit on the road in front of each door, to preserve people and animals from colic. In the Liège district it is considered right to eat green cabbage on Shrove Tuesday, in order that the cabbages may not be attacked by little flies or caterpillars.

The first Sunday in Lent is called the "Sunday of the Great Fires," for on that day bonfires are lit in many villages, as was also the custom in the towns until the middle of the century. The fires are lit on the surrounding hills, and the material is provided by the children, who beg the wood from door to door. He who refuses to give, "for the love of God" (as it is termed), is pursued on the following day by a crowd of children, who attempt to blacken his face with charcoal from the extinct flames.

At Great Halleux a pole, called the sorceress, is placed in the centre of the fire. The last person wedded lights the flame, and the young people then

proceed to dance round the fire. At Laroche an old broom used to be tied to the top of the pole which served as the centre of the bonfire; of the young men present he in whose direction the broom fell would be the first to be married. In the district of Morlanwelz a mannikin of straw is thrown into the fire. The children at Ensival are told that they will have as many eggs at Easter as they have seen fires on that day.

March the 12th, the festival of St Gregory, the patron-saint of schoolboys, is, as might be expected, well observed. At Hesbaye the children shut the master up in the school and sing, "St Gregory, patron of scholars, give us a holiday." It would certainly be difficult to refuse a petition of this kind, even if it were not backed up by the threat to keep the unhappy pedagogue in *durance vile*.

Palm Sunday meets with due observance; small branches of box-leaves, which have been blessed by the priest, being placed at the corners of all corn-fields, and sometimes on the tombs.

It is considered lucky to cook bread and unlucky to wash linen on Good Friday. The children at Hesbaye are told that if they fast on Good Friday they will find a small knife afterwards; while in the Liège district on Easter Eve they are told that it is the bells which sow eggs in the gardens, and consequently the little ones rise early on the following morning to discover the eggs which the parents have hidden there.

The 1st of May is naturally a great feast with the young people. Branches of various trees are attached at night to the roof or planted before the doors of houses where young girls are living. These branches have a symbolic meaning: thus a sprig of box-tree, with a ribbon attached, is to be considered a declaration of love.

At Amay, on the first Sunday in May, the peasants flock in crowds from the environs to the mass in honour of St Brigitte. Having made their offerings, they carry away earth, which has been blessed by the priest, upon a copper plate with its sides embossed with figures representing cows, pigs, and other animals. Each peasant takes care to stroke them with her hand for the benefit of her own cattle. Little baskets, too, and handkerchiefs are filled with the earth, which is mixed with the animal's fodder.

At Huy, in the church of St Remy, on the festival of St Brigitte, the image of the saint with her little black cow is shown to the crowd, who press forward to touch it. Those who cannot reach it with their hands make use of their sticks for the purpose.

Another saint held in great honour by country-folk, especially in Brabant and Hainault, is St Servais, whose festival falls on the 13th of May. At Stambruges, near Tournai, he is honoured in the following manner; On the Sunday after his festival the peasants cut flexible wands, from which they peel the bark, and entering the church, touch the

statue of the saint with them on the breast, side, and back. After this they purchase the saint's image, which upon their return home they hang up in the stable by the side of the stick, which is supposed thenceforward to possess the property of curing all sick animals.

As in the time of our Saxon ancestors, many observances are attached to St John the Baptist's Day (June 24). At Sinsin straw is burnt on the roads eight days before the festival, in order that the horses which pass over it may escape colic for the rest of the year. Fires are lit on St John's Eve, like those of the first Sunday in Lent. Those who leap over the flames are supposed to be free from colic during the rest of the year, while charcoal from the extinct embers is preserved as a specific against fire. On the banks of the Ourthe and the Meuse the children are sent on the stroke of midnight to bathe in the river, although the exact object of these ablutions is not quite clear.

On All-Souls' Day, in the environs of Verviers, the children are warned not to throw stones into the hedge, or to cut sticks, for fear of disturbing the souls perched on the boughs; the children in the same districts go about swinging flower-pots full of lighted coals with the cry, "A centime for the poor souls!"

On the following day, November 3, St Hubert, the patron-saint of hunters, is invoked at Liège with a formula against lightning and hydrophobia. Simi-

larly at Hainault the children, when they see a wandering dog, call out—

“Great Saint Hubert,  
Who is in his chapel,  
Who sees us, who calls us,  
Big dog, little dog,  
Pass your way, I am doing nothing.”

In the south-east of the province of Liège the peasants walk through the fields on St Martin's Day (November 11), going round the fruit-trees with sticks in their hands wrapped up in lighted hay or straw. As they run, the little boys sing the refrain—

“Good Saint Martin,  
Send apples and pears  
Into our garden.”

As St Catherine was broken on a wheel, her day, at the end of November, is kept by all who have to do with wheels—such as millers, carters, and the like; none of them must turn a wheel on that day.

On St Thomas's Day the children at Nivelles shut up their parents or schoolmasters, and before letting them go exact from them the promise of a treat or holiday. It is certainly hard to see why this day should be selected, especially as it falls so near to Christmas.

To the last-named season many pleasing legends belong. When the hour strikes at midnight, ushering in the holy day, the cattle are supposed to fall upon

their knees in the stalls, and any one who sees them in this position will become blind. In most districts they place a piece of bread and a pint of water on the window-sill outside the house, and in some villages oats and forage in front of the door of the stable.

At midnight all of these are blessed. The hen which has eaten the oats thus consecrated is assured against the attacks of the fox and other animals, while the cow which has eaten the forage may graze with impunity in the most unwholesome pastures.

Besides the curious beliefs attaching to the days of the Calendar, many quaint ideas and customs connected with courtship, marriage, and funerals still linger among the simple peasantry of Belgium, especially in the Walloon districts.

Thus a girl will expect to be married within a year if she sees three lighted lamps accidentally placed together in the same room, or if she have succeeded in removing the whole of the peel of a pear without breaking it, or, again, if on the "day of the great fires" (spoken of above) she has noticed seven fires at the same moment. The maiden who wets her apron unduly while washing linen or scrubbing the kitchen-floor is destined to marry a drunkard.

At Liège the belief is current that the girl who finds on her plate a bay-leaf which ought to have been put in the pudding, will have to wait seven years for her wedding. At Nivelles they condemn



to a like fortune the maiden who makes a detour to avoid a broom placed in her way or accepts a seat at the foot of the table.

Should a girl in the Verviers district wish to dream of her future husband, she has only to eat a raw herring and her desire will be granted. At Liège another process, leading to the same result, is adopted. Every evening for seven days in succession she must count seven stars in the sky, commencing again patiently if a cloudy night should happen to intervene. When she has at length succeeded in this rather monotonous task, she is rewarded by the belief that the first young man who shakes hands with her is destined to be her husband.

The favoured days for a wedding are Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Monday is always considered unfortunate. At Liège the month of May is avoided; at Hervé, April. A white horse harnessed to the bride's carriage forebodes a happy marriage. If two brothers marry two sisters on the same day, one of the unions must be broken in order that the other may turn out well.

At Arbin Neufchâteau the poor people light wisps of straw, with little paper flags attached to them, as the wedding-party passes by; in return for this they receive presents from the bride and bridegroom, and those taking part in the procession. In some villages near Liège the innkeepers light the straw as a kind of request for custom. The wedding-guests form a circle round the straw, which flares up, and

when it is burnt the bride takes some of the ashes and shuts them up in her purse. At Stavelot it is considered a presage of misfortune for the bride to weep during the ceremony. If she wishes to have the upper hand in her future home, she must take care to be treated at the wedding breakfast in the same way as if she were a stranger; and if she wish to retain her husband's love, she must eat half a piece of pie while she offers to him the remaining portion.

To turn from marriage to death. A lighted candle, previously blessed, is placed in the hand of the dying person, and in some parts of Hainault it is thought right to make the animals belonging to the dead man wear mourning. Crape will be placed on the neck of the cat, or on the bird's cage, or even on the beehive; otherwise it is supposed that the bird will die, and the hive be forsaken by the bees, before the year is out. Clocks are stopped; and at Stavelot all water in saucepans and other vessels must be thrown away, for the soul is said to have passed through these to purify itself before leaving the house. There is a notion at Laroche that if a burial takes place on Sunday, there will be another death during the week in the same locality; and at Court St Etienne they fancy that if a person is buried on a Friday, another of the same family will die in the year.

Some of the country remedies for various ailments are decidedly curious, not to say superstitious. At

Laroche the unfortunate person attacked by cholera must drink water with which dog's fat has been mixed. For cancer a living crab must be applied to the breast; while for a sprained ankle the remedy consists in placing the foot in the intestines of a cow that has just been killed. For erysipelas a piece of fox's tongue torn from the animal while alive, and blessed in honour of St Rose, must be placed upon the affected part. A quaint remedy for neuralgia consists in fastening an eel's skin round the right knee, and placing an iron hoop round the head.

At Stavelot, where superstitious fancies seem to abound, an idea prevails that to find the body of a person who has been drowned all that is necessary is to throw some consecrated bread into the stream, which the dead body will seize with its hand when it passes over it.

To get rid of a sty the peasant in the Liège and Verviers districts repeats for three days in the morning, before his breakfast, the words—

“ Good night, sty ;  
Go as you have come ” ;

while thrice at night, before retiring to rest, he utters the same expression. At the same time, making the sign of the cross, he moistens the sty with the saliva, either with a wedding ring or with the hem of his shirt turned inside out.

For consumption one may choose, if so minded,

the simple and nasty remedy of eating dog's fat, or one may take every day two spoonfuls of water with which charcoal dust from the St John's night fires has been mixed. A horse-chestnut kept in the pocket is considered a safeguard against rheumatism, and at Theux it is thought to be equally efficacious to keep five coffin nails in a little bag suspended to the neck.

For warts the patient at Pepinster must make as many knots in a string as there are warts on his hands; then he must throw the string away without turning round. The person who picks up the string is supposed to become the happy possessor of the infirmity. At Moha even the dead are not left in peace, for when the church bell sounds for a funeral the person troubled with warts is recommended to dip his hand in a brook while the bells are tolling for the departed, and to wish that the dead person may have the warts instead of himself. Less gruesome is the practice at Gosselies of cutting onions in two and then rubbing the warts with the pieces, after which the fragments are buried and the Pater and the Ave recited three times in succession. For toothache the herbalists at Hesbaye touch the bad tooth with a nail, and then tell the patient to fasten the nail in a tree, when the pain is supposed to disappear in proportion as the nail penetrates the wood.

A simple and nasty remedy for sore throat consists in placing some earthworms in a small bag of

cloth and applying this to the throat. The worms by decomposing are said to create a great heat, and so they may; but such a poultice must be particularly trying, even to an angler. Another cure is to roll a skein of red silk round the neck.

For the jaundice is prescribed the dreadful remedy of applying a live tench or carp as poultice to the region of the liver, and leaving it there until it becomes putrid. The fish is supposed to catch the disease and die.

Besides the fanciful remedies which I have quoted, there are many others which bear the impress of common-sense, and are identical with those practised by the country-people in England with perfect success.

The peasants who practise as herbalists, or quack doctors, are usually designated in the Walloon dialect by the name of *segneu*, or *signeur*, being so called from their habit of exorcising the disease with the sign of the cross. As a rule, they spit upon the affected part, and make a sign of the cross by spreading the saliva with the finger; after which they make a second sign, accompanied by benediction and prayer.

Like most regions of hill and woodland, the Ardennes and the country round Liège teem with legendary lore, concerning various mysterious beings, such as the wonderful goat, the guardian of hidden treasure, in the ruined Castle of Franchimont; the wild huntsman, who is said to wind the horn at midnight and dash with hundreds of hounds through the

forest near Bohan or the woods of Grivegnée. Such, too, are the *nutons* or *lutons*, weird little men, about two feet high, supposed to haunt the grottoes of Luxemburg and Namur. But all these myths are fast ebbing away, and the wane of the nineteenth century has probably seen the last of those who attached any serious credence to such fancies. Possibly the advent of steam-engines, motor-cars, and cycles has done much to shake the peasant's simple belief in the old legends of the supernatural. We may yet expect, however, that such old-world tales will for a long time continue, in a measure, to colour the complexion of his thoughts in a land of mountains, woods, and streams. These remarks, however, must not be taken to apply to the belief in witchcraft, which, had we space, we could show to be wide, and will probably linger for a much longer period than the notions concerning beings of a mysterious and ghostly nature.

So far I have spoken almost entirely of the folklore of the Walloon districts of Belgium, but it must not be supposed that the supernatural has less interest for the more stolid and phlegmatic peasant of Flanders than for his more vivacious and keen-witted countryman.

Flat and commonplace as the greater part of Flanders may be, and wanting as it is in the weird influences of the wilder scenery of the Ardennes, it is astonishing with what completeness the fancy of the Fleming has delineated the world of spirit and

of mystery. Were-wolf, wild huntsman and water-sprite, Will-o'-the-wisp and mermaid, to say nothing of dragons and sorcerers and the arch-fiend himself, seem to flit across the vision of the apparently matter-of-fact and inert tiller of the soil in a wild and bewildering procession.

In one direction his credulity appears to be further developed than that of his Walloon neighbours. The various legends concerning the Virgin, saints, and angels, and those dealing with the cross, relics, church-bells, and other matters connected with worship, attract a large share of his attention and exercise considerable influence upon his life and customs.

As might be expected in a Roman Catholic country, the worship of the Virgin Mary is much in evidence. Her image is to be found everywhere, not only in the churches, where a special altar is consecrated in her honour, but in the little chapels of wood or stone which we meet with even in the most out-of-the-way spots in the country, on the walls of the houses, and within the houses themselves.

The Flemish peasant possesses a caustic humour and criticises freely the actions of his betters. Even the curé does not escape the shafts of his wit. Many popular sayings and proverbs are to be found in this connection: "The curé does not say two masses for the same money." And again, in allusion to the supposed fondness of the priests for good cheer:

“He drinks like a templar.” “He acts like the monks; he eats so much that he sweats, and works so little that he catches cold.” “A very good drink comes from the monk’s cask.” Of a person who preaches well, but acts badly, they say, “Yes, it is as the curé says, ‘Listen to my words, but don’t imitate my actions.’”

But whatever truth there may be in proverbial sayings in the abstract, we must not suppose that the Belgian curé compares unfavourably with the Roman Catholic priest of other nationalities. Many of them are men of high attainments, and lead lives full of devotion to the duties of their sacred calling; but weak points, where they exist, are unlikely to escape the notice of the ever-watchful Fleming. Long services are not much to the liking of the latter, if we may judge by the following anecdote, which comes from Sottegem:—

“A curé, after having spoken for a long time in his sermon of the life and miracles of a certain saint, cried out at the end of his discourse, ‘Where must I place him in the heaven? Must I place him with the angels? No, much higher. Must I place him with the archangels? No, much higher. Must I place him with the seraphim? No, much higher.’ Here he was interrupted by an impatient listener, who got up with the words, ‘Place him here, on my seat; I am off.’”

An amusing tale relates how a curé had gone with



his clerk to administer the Sacrament to a sick person. It was a dark night, and on returning both of them fell into a deep pond. When on the point of drowning, the curé cried out, "Sacristan, hold fast to the faith." But the clerk, who was a clever swimmer and was already close to the edge, answered, "Monsieur le Curé, do that yourself. For my part, I am holding to the grass." He got out of the water, but the curé, alas! was drowned.

The use of the sign of the cross is extremely prevalent among the Flemish, and is by no means confined to such occasions as entering or leaving a church, when all devout Roman Catholics are expected to make the sign, after dipping their hands in holy water. Many workmen are accustomed to make the sign before commencing their task; this is especially the case with weavers, carters, and harvestmen.

In certain places a carter before starting on a journey will make the sign of the cross on the forehead of his horses, or trace a cross on the ground with his foot in front of the animals when harnessed. Schoolboys will sign themselves before and after lessons; at one time, indeed, a child's first primer was entitled "Little Cross A B C" because a cross was drawn in front of the letter A.

A white cross is attached to the door of a stable or the shutter of a house to drive away evil spirits and witches; the person who closes the shutters in

the evening crosses himself, saying, "I drive away ill, and allow good to enter." Many people cross themselves before playing cards. The children, too, playing marbles, make the cross on the ground and say when their opponent shoots, "Little cross, grant that he may miss."

In Flanders, after sowing, the peasants will plant beans or other crops in the form of a cross in a corner of the field; similarly, too, at Haspengowv the binders of the sheaves will place the band which unites the stalks so as to form the shape of a cross.

Brickmakers, on terminating their task, often construct a brick cross, while thatchers will make one of straw on one of the corners of the roof.

Besides wild huntsmen, ghosts, water-sprites, and other mysterious beings of the same kind, the Flemish peasant possesses, according to M. Teirlinck, a very vivid belief in the existence of an army of devils, marshalled under the direction of the arch-fiend himself. Generally the devil is portrayed under the form of a monstrous and dark animal with goat's feet, and claws instead of hands. He is further provided with horns, which curve over his back, together with the conventional tail. Sometimes he changes himself into the shape of a black dog; at other times he appears as a gentleman in black. But even in the latter case he is usually represented with the traditional hoofs and horns, which he vainly endeavours to conceal beneath his ample cloak. The notion is

current that the devil presents himself to those in trouble and proposes to remove their difficulties. But in exchange for his help he requires their soul. Should any one agree to these terms, the contract must be drawn up and signed in the blood of the man who sells his soul. A meeting is arranged for the purpose, and the person who makes the nefarious contract must come to the appointed place, usually a cross-road or a cemetery, with a black hen, in return for which he receives a small box containing a waxen image, which no one can well describe, for few have beheld it. Armed with this box, he can do whatever he desires, for all devils are obedient to his will.

Sometimes the evil one is said to show himself in the tavern, or he replaces in a game of cards the fourth player, who is expected but has not yet arrived, or again, at a ball, his appearance is attended by the consequence that his partner will belong to him in the future. Therefore the peasants consider it unwise to dance with a partner with whom they are not acquainted.

To escape from the clutches of the arch-fiend, the cross, holy water, and prayer are looked upon as the best safeguards. To these must be added the holy box-tree, which the peasant plants in abundance in the neighbourhood of his house and stable.

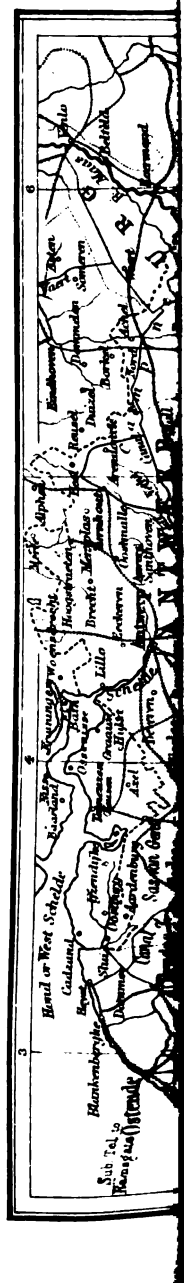
In the vicinity of Antwerp they believe that the souls of persons killed in duels belong to Satan, and in some places he is supposed to become the owner of

the horses which have carried a dead body from the mortuary to the church.

Many are the legends in which the devil plays a part, and numerous are the proverbs and sayings in which he is spoken of. Some twenty plants, too, are designated in Flemish by an appellation which recalls his name.







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